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ABSTRACT

This issue focuses on Latin Americans and the media, with emphasis on portrayal of the Latin American in United States mass media. "Puerto Ricans and the Media: A Personal Statement" (B. Vasquez) recalls the author's experiences as a young girl in the New York City public schools and in an urban college. The critical importance of the media in shaping her self-image and the collective image of Puerto Ricans is described. The following articles focus on film-making about and by Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans, the media on the Puerto Rican island, and Spanish-language radio: (1) "Mass Media in Puerto Rico" (F. A. Subervi-Velez and others); (2) "The Origins of the Consumer Culture in Puerto Rico: The Pre-Television Years (1898-1954)" (L. A. Hernandez); (3) "The Aesthetic Discourse: Reading Chicano Cinema Since "La Bamba"" (C. Noriega); (4) "Mi Gente" (P. Figueroa); (5) "Insider/Outsider: Making Films in the Puerto Rican Community" (F. Negron-Mutaner); (6) "La Quinceanera of Chicana Counter Aesthetics" (R. L. Fregoso); (7) "Images and Contradictions: DIVEDCO's (Division de Educacion de la Communidad) Portrayal of Puerto Rican Life" (A. Lauria-Perricelli); (8) "Mi Gente" (M. Falu); and (9) "Latino Journal" (S. Nieves). "Micro-Computers as Research Tools and Community Resources" (R. Chabran) reviews databases for Latino information users. A list of "Centro" publications is appended. (SLD)

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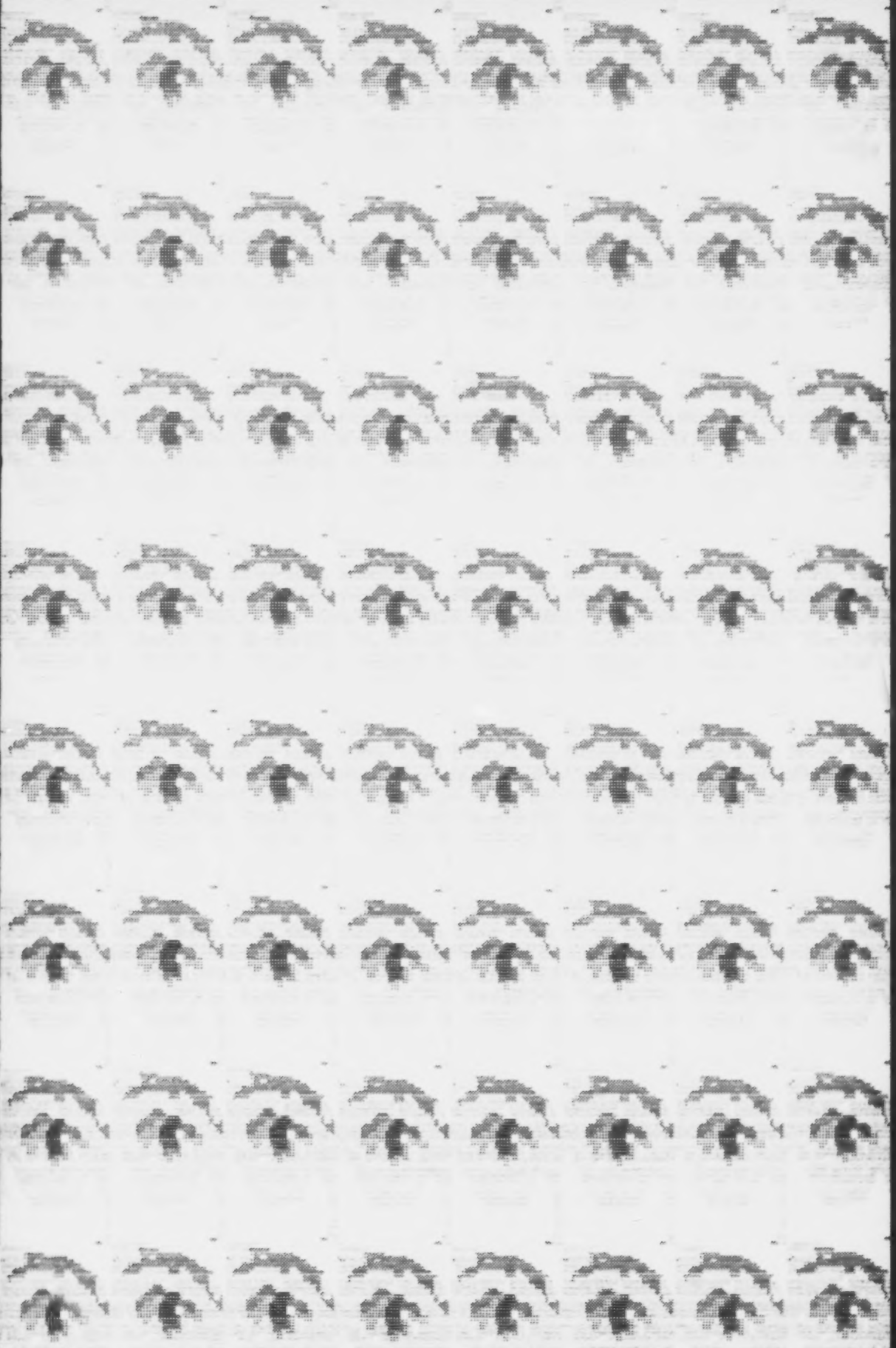

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FOCUS *EN FOCO*
Latinos and the Media

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■ San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1941. Jack Delano

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Puerto Ricans and the Media

A Personal Statement

Blanca Vázquez

Maybe this is personal.

A friend of mine who lives in Paris told me some years ago of seeing *West Side Story* (1961), which played for a solid year in Paris when he was a kid. In Athens, when my friend Arhonto introduced me to a fellow Greek as a Puerto Rican from New York, he said, "Ah, Puerto Rican? *West Side Story*! Knives!" And for the first time, I realized that in addition to its impact on New York audiences or on me, *West Side Story* was projecting an image of Puerto Ricans on a world wide level. *West Side Story* was the image that Claude and the Greek man had received of Puerto Ricans. Their real contact with real Puerto Ricans, needless to say, had been minimal. That real Puerto Ricans were not even cast in the main roles didn't matter. The roles of Maria (Natalie Wood) and that of the other "Puerto Ricans" in the film became the projection of Puerto Rican reality *internationally*: gangs, knives and street fights in an impoverished community. And what did the "real" Puerto Rican, Anita (for which Puerto Rican Rita Moreno won a Best Supporting Actress Academy award) do in the film? Not only was she another Latina "spitfire," she also sang a song denigrating Puerto Rico and by implication, being Puerto Rican. "I Want to Live in America," yes, and the reason she wanted to live in America was that living in Puerto Rico would have meant living in an alien environment (there's a reversal). But she was also saying that she wanted to escape being Puerto Rican. She wanted "out" of the Puerto Rican reality; that's what she was saying. I remember seeing it and being ashamed. That was 1961 and I was just barely a teenager.

So this *is* personal.

I don't think we can tell this story, our stories, without talking about the pain of it; the pain of being made to feel ashamed of who and what we are. There is no media

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agenda we can speak of today without making reference to or being grounded in this *lived* experience. It's what focuses us and brings us to struggle today.

And there's a long history of this.

We were exposed to newspapers at home. My father who was a cab driver brought home the *Daily News*, the *Journal American*, and the other tabloid, the *Mirror*; he read *El Diario*, and I on Sundays picked up the *Herald Tribune* and sometimes *The New York Times*. New York then had a rich tradition of newspapers. So in addition to watching television, I read the papers. I never forgot the headlines over the "Cape Man," the animal-teen killer. The fact that he was a kid, 14 or 15 at the time of the crime, did not win him sympathy, the liberal kind. It worked, in Salvador's case, to prove that "those" people were savages. The facts of the case mattered less than the general impression that was conveyed in the papers and on television. Salvador Agron was sentenced to the chair (later commuted to life). Through his sensationalized story and a trial that was scandalous by any standard of justice, all Puerto Ricans had been put down, had been given images of barbarism and savagery.[1] The "real" image imparted through the press and television news programs (and in those days we were less skeptical about the media) and the "unreal" screen image converged.

In the 1970s and as part of the Movement, I signed petitions Genoveva Clemente
6 circulated to release Salvador from prison. In the intervening years Salvador had grown up in prison, had studied, becoming a writer of sorts, and a political cause. Salvador had come full circle, had become us, all of us.

So this is also political.

We became media active in the 1960s and 70s in order to mobilize and organize. Media coverage of struggles and takeovers was an essential strategy of the Puerto Rican civil rights movement, a lesson not lost on the government or the press, who have moved in the 1980s and 90s to minimize the coverage of social movements and to deny access to an activist press.

And it is also theoretical.

Stuart Hall, who's done a lot of thinking about all of this, says that the media's main sphere of operation is the production and transformation of ideologies: "How we *see* ourselves and our social relations *matters*, because it enters into and informs our actions and practices."[2]

How we see ourselves and how others see us. What so impressed me about Richie Pérez' piece in the last issue of *CENTRO*, "From Assimilation to Annihilation: Puerto Rican Images in U.S. Films," was the *persistence* of the image. Richie documented the teenage gang image of Puerto Rican youth from the 1940s to the early 1980s in films ranging from *City Across the River* (1949) to *The Young Savages* (1961) to *Fort Apache, the Bronx* (1981). In the 80s, the now Latino youth gangs (in the "Decade of the Hispanic" gang members can be Puerto Rican, Colombian, Chicano or Cuban), are even more savage. The gangs have been brought up-to-date: now they are dealing in crack-cocaine, nationally organized and true to modern film and television cultural norms, specialize in the brutal slaughter of each other and innocent bystanders, utilizing technologically-advanced automatic weapons. On television, *Miami Vice* modernized and developed the genre with its high tech design and pulsating rock music. In a MI GENTE interview in this issue, filmmaker Pablo Figueroa correctly states that *Miami Vice* was a running advertisement for all those high tech weapons.

It is what Richie calls a "hardening of the image." Where does that leave us? Well, for one thing, these images again converge with real life. Brutal images of brutal youth serve to justify the indiscriminate street killings of African American and Latino males by the police. Forty-one of the 44 people killed by police in New York City in the first 10 months of 1990 were Black or Hispanic as were 82 of the 90 people wounded.[3] Why is it nearly impossible to get an indictment or conviction of killer cops? Even if the victim is an adult worker (Juan Rodríguez) or an older woman (Eleanor Bumpers), police force, no matter how brutal or violent and uncalled for, is *presumed* to be justified. And establishing presumptions, frameworks for understanding the world, a context in which

to interpret events—ideology—is a major role of the media.

Common sense, or what Stuart Hall would call the "pervasive racist common sense" is that cops are justified in fearing peoples of color and hence of shooting first and asking questions later because African American and Latino males are violent.[4] In program after program and film after film, the only line between civilization (call it "law and order" or "safe streets") and savagery (the "inner city ghetto") is a blue one—the men and *women* in blue.[5] This trend in films and television programs, of the cop being judge, jury and executioner is a persistent theme in the 80s and 90s—the sanctioning of extreme measures to deal with "extreme" situations.[6] Out the window goes the Bill of Rights, the presumption of innocence or the right to trial by jury. If you believe what you see in the movies, or if films and television programs create a mindset, it is this: criminals are getting away with murder, the criminal justice system is soft and letting criminals back on the streets, and cops have to resort to extra-legal means to protect "us." This is the prevailing "common sense;" a common sense that allows ordinary citizens to look away when police officers commit murder or to always presume that cops act out of justifiable motive.

The mindsets created affect us, people of color, as well as the larger society we are a part of. And a lot more work needs to be done on how we internalize and act upon these relentless messages.

■ *Sins of Omission*

What was missing from all of those screen images of Puerto Ricans? *Mi abuela*, my sisters, my mother, my father, friends and neighbors. My mother was a sewing machine operator who worked 8 to 5, was never sick or late for work, and came home to raise four girls. My father worked six days a week driving a cab on the night shifts of New York. I'm not seeking to make icons of them (or saying that growing up in a working class Puerto Rican family didn't have its own internal contradictions and history of internalized structures of oppression), but my parents were more typical of Puerto Ricans in the city than the juvenile delinquents and prostitutes on the screen. My folks, like most of us, were hardworking, honest folk: kids following the rules even when the rules were unfair; people falling in love, getting married, raising kids; preaching the gospel; paying bills and taxes; dancing to *plena*, *merengue* and *boleros* at house parties; joining unions; *sancochando habichuelas*; helping their neighbors; tending the sick; *bochinchando* about everything and everyone; playing the numbers; taking in relatives from Puerto Rico and helping people find jobs; having it tough financially and joking about poverty, *americanos* and "modern" life. This working class Brooklyn neighborhood of friends, relatives, and neighbors—our everyday life—was no where depicted in the media. Was I growing up on a different planet?

What does it mean to be Puerto Rican if the society does not reflect you or reflects you pathologically? What does it mean to *choose* to be called Puerto Rican, to self-identify, if to do so is to line up with working class people, "inferior" people of color, confined to projects and poor housing, expected to fail in school and to end up in prison or on welfare? The power of those other images was that in spite of the overwhelming preponderance of the evidence before us that we were hardworking everyday folk, we internalized the other message—that there was something wrong with us. What was wrong with us, of course, had more to do with our color, language, culture, and most of all, class, in a city whose neighborhoods and power structures were unquestionably white.

It was years before I would put this all together. Before I could understand how all of this was working on me, I had to first survive the public world of school I entered that assigned or imposed on me another Puerto Rican "reality," that saw me as a Puerto Rican first and on my merits second. To this day I find it difficult to speak about the pain of school. First of all you feel small and you are small and the adults who direct, teach and sometimes command you have a great deal of power over you. We were also socialized at home to obey and to respect adults (even when they were outrageous), so to critique adults was inconceivable. What was coming at me in school was what I would

now call a whole mindset of expectations. I was dark, too dark, but not exactly black; I was poor, poorer than anyone else (though this was not necessarily the case); and I could get by but not excel. Mostly I felt a preponderance of attitudes and expectations that took the form of neglect and dismissal. Students acted this out in similar and different ways. Some of them might talk to me or "accept" me in class but if I was on the school block with fellow Puerto Ricans or African Americans, they would just keep on walking. Children are very vulnerable to all of this. A lot of what happens happens on a feeling level, messages are conveyed both overtly and inferentially, with little space for self or collective defense.

I may not have succumbed to all of it in the end but if I didn't it was for concrete reasons: I was a female; my family had resources or class advantages (my father was a high school grad when he arrived from Puerto Rico and my mother had fortitude); the schools I went to were still predominantly white and therefore teaching children to read and write; and I was both a smart cookie and a quiet kid (practically mute in class). And if you think I felt bad (inferior) in elementary or high school, well, imagine college. First of all, I went to tuition-free City College of New York, the only school my family could afford. There were no people who looked like me, no Puerto Rican and few African American faculty. And even the teachers who weren't racist were of little help to me,
8 since I walked in there in fear, full of self-doubt and insecurities.

Then came the Movement that saved my life. First, the mobilizations in the South—the Civil Rights Movement—then the Young Lords, the takeover at City College in 1968, demands for Open Admissions, Black and Puerto Rican Studies, affirmative action, community control, housing, the anti-Vietnam War mobilization. The media battle for our and their hearts and minds was on. These battles were a revolution in our way of thinking and addressing our social reality, even if they didn't revolutionize the society and its social relations.

What those battles did was to begin to change the terms of the discourse about "America" and the "American way of life." Before the 1960s the American way of life included Jim Crow segregation, legally mandated in the South, and *de facto* segregation, systemic in the northern cities. The American way of life relegated its minorities to subordinate positions in the work force and in virtually all aspects of life, so that entertainers of African descent had to use the service entrances of the grand hotels they performed in. And it would take class action legal suits to open up craft jobs in the telephone company to Black males (1968) and women of any color (1972). Hollywood and television reflected this systematic exclusion, with its preponderance of stereotypical characters.

What became clear was that the media served to create an "American" consensus and that this "nation of immigrants" was held together by a set of beliefs about itself and its component parts, what writer Toni Morrison calls the Master Narrative.[8] The two major institutions in my life that produced, transmitted and maintained this consensus were the media, in both popular and institutionalized forms (Hollywood, advertising, television, radio and the press), and the public school system which socialized children to be Americans. To be American was to think American. Not to think as the government would have us think—to oppose the war in Vietnam or the Middle East, for example, or to question how well our particular brand of "representative democracy" works, was to be un-American (the "go-back-to where-you-come-from" common sense).

■ *Back to Where We Came From*

As Puerto Ricans, we grew up with contradictions and in contradictions. Are we Americans? Well, not really. Are we Puerto Rican? Well, we may never have been to Puerto Rico. Generations from New York or Chicago grew up on Motown (now Rap music) and watched *American Bandstand* (now Rap videos). There are parts of *here* that are us and parts of *there* that are not us. So we grow up with ambivalence, a sense of belonging to neither place, until we begin a more conscious process of finding out who we are, where we come from, why we are here and what we choose to be, until we begin to struggle it

out and name ourselves. It was only through social movements that sought to *rescatar* (recover and reclaim) our history, honor our culture and ancestors, and to organize collectively to change the historical matrix of societal constraints imposed on us, that we found pleasure and joy and gloried in being Puerto Ricans.

An integral part of this process of recovery, claiming, naming, and healing was the concerted campaign to find out where we came from. Up until my college days, we knew little about Puerto Rico. We were the invisible people in history classes or texts. We knew what our parents told us, mostly family stories, and what the popular culture conveyed. Back to *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) or *West Side Story*. So we began to study history; to understand where we came from and our cultural heritage as well as baggage. In the process we *re*-discovered Columbus, Agueybana and the rape of the Caribbean, understanding for the first time what colonization and imperialism meant for us. We learned to analyze the historical role Luis Muñoz Marín played and the nature of the sacrifice *Don* Pedro Albizu Campos and the Nationalists were really talking about, and we claimed *bomba y plena* and the Spanish language in a new way.

I remember how important *Realidades* was in the mid-1970s. Walking into the waspish domains of Channel 13 on West 58th street to meet with Humberto Cintrón, José García, Raquel Ortiz, Dylcia Pagán, Julio Rodríguez. I was a volunteer member of the Puerto Rican Media Action and Education Council, the community arm of *Realidades*, a Puerto Rican series on 13. Those *Realidades* programs on the Nationalists and *santería* forever changed the way I looked at myself. So did the recurrent images of *Don* Pedro, the community demonstrations on the evening news programs, the study groups, strategizing in organizations such as the Puerto Rican Media Council and the Latin Women's Collective (LWC), alliances with Third World women's organizations and activities in the community.

We began to research our history, write about it, produce slide shows, dramatizations (actresses Elizabeth Peña and Gloria Zelaya created skits for the LWC's International Working Women's Day celebrations), and make films and videotapes. Lillian Jiménez' article in the last issue of *CENTRO* documents these first cinema'images created by us and for us. For Puerto Ricans "picking up the camera," she says, "was equivalent to 'picking up the gun' in defense of civil and human rights in the United States..." All were attempts to alter the discourse on Puerto Ricans, to present *la otra cara de la moneda*, some of the trials and tribulations, pain and joy of being Puerto Rican; above all, they chronicled the struggles that were changing how we saw ourselves and how the outer society saw us. Make no mistake. These were subversive endeavors: new images that would undo the damage, liberate people, and unite communities of color. For instead of seeing ourselves as individually in pain, we took ownership of our collective pain. In the process, I understood that when I saw cowboys-and-Indians movies as a kid, I identified with the "Indians." I identified, for example, with the quiet dignity of Tonto, the Lone Ranger's sidekick. In my fantasies I sometimes rewrote the Hollywood and television scripts. Much later I would understand this level of reconstruction and identification with Native Americans: on the one hand, they looked like me; on the other, their trail of tears and mine were one.

■ *Fast Forward*

In the years to come I would get involved in producing newsletters for organizations I worked with such as the Latin Women's Collective; I would become Associate Producer of *La Operación* (1982), Ana María García's documentary film on the mass sterilization of Puerto Rican women; and worked on the *Compañera* slide show, a dramatized piece on the participation of women in the labor movement of Puerto Rico. I returned to school in the early 1980s and got a master's degree from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

Probably my greatest surprise at Columbia was the systematic lack of theoretical discussion about the media, especially their role and function. Journalism was essentially either "good" or "bad," "objective" or not objective. At Columbia, journalists could be

mildly critical of the body politic, but how the media are deeply implicated in the ruling structures and discourses of society was not on the agenda. How could it be otherwise, when courses were taught by editors and reporters from the *New York Times*, *CBS* and the *Wall Street Journal*?

After Columbia I came to work at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College. At the Center, a small xeroxed newsletter announcing the Centro's Tenth Anniversary events eventually blossomed into the *CENTRO Bulletin*, or in my own mind, into RICAN II. You may recall *The Rican*, a Puerto Rican journal published in the mid-1970s out of Chicago featuring scholarly work, poetry and photographs on the Puerto Rican experience. The other "model" for *CENTRO* was the *Black Scholar*, still in publication, which focuses on the African American experience.

For the last two years I have been teaching a journalism course for high school students at the City College Mini-College program, a drop-out prevention program funded through the Board of Education. The students—from Roosevelt High School in the Bronx—are all Third World, reflecting the city's changing population. They come from Latin American and Caribbean countries: Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guyana, Mexico and Central America; the African American students are one to two generations removed from the southern United States. They listen to the same radio
10 stations (rap, house music and reggae); read the same newspaper—the *Daily News* (and occasionally the Black or Latino press); and watch hours of television. The extent to which the students get their information from television, as opposed to reading, surprised me. TV programs with African American or Latino characters predominate: from *In Living Color* to *Amen*. Latino students also catch *novelas* and none of the students watch PBS or documentaries. Last Spring we followed the Yusef Hawkins murder trial in all the city's newspapers; students awaited the verdict and wrote about the importance of the outcome to them. They've done stories on homelessness and written "letters" to their younger brothers and sisters on what they need to know about AIDS. Each semester students interview the oldest member of their family, connecting personal and family histories. This experience has taught me a great deal, first about the nature of the world they are living in, too often violent and confusing, and secondly, about the need to work with young people on a more critical understanding of the media and of events that unfold which affect their lives.

■ *PART II: To Be Media Active in the 1990s*
—Towards A Puerto Rican Media Research Agenda[8]

Two things then, bring me to critically reflect on the importance of the media in our lives: One is a lifetime of engagement with the Hollywood-made constructs which vicariously entertain and also shape popular thinking. The other is acknowledging the public's growing dependency on television, radio and newspapers to provide the information and frameworks through which we understand local, national and world events.

Enter into the Frame: Media activists, progressives, people of color, ordinary citizens. What would a progressive media agenda look like? What would we measurably want to accomplish? The challenge to a prevailing racist common sense is incumbent upon us. It is a struggle with many fronts, including: 1) the demystification of the mainstream media through critical analyses and social practice; 2) effective and creative engagements between media makers and working class communities; and, 3) the production of alternative media, and the building of alternative media infrastructures (including organization and coalition building between producers and users), and the utilization of cable, public access, and new technologies. The following represents the beginnings of a Puerto Rican Research/Action Media Agenda and some of the issues it raises:

◗ *The Critique of Mainstream Media*

The need, to reflect ourselves and to see ourselves reflected is a fundamental human one. High school students have confirmed for me that they are so hungry for images of

themselves that any images, even negative ones, are preferable to no images at all. We need to better understand how these images impact on young people, especially on an electronically-wired, media-saturated generation that reads little. Not what people see in the market share way that advertising agencies and the Nielsen company might measure, but how these images contribute to the construction of identity and to the beliefs and perceptions others have of us. Beyond being escapist, which many of those programs are to the extent that they often seek to create alternative universes where racism, whether institutionalized, inferred or overt does not exist, these programs have intent and meaning and affect our practice.

It is important to deconstruct what messages are conveyed and why some programs are so popular. I have always been surprised at the immense popularity of *The Bill Cosby Show*, especially with non-black audiences. Then I began to understand part of its appeal. Yes, Bill Cosby is a consummate performer and very entertaining. And yes, the Cosby show reinforces traditional middle-class values (as do most sit-coms): the nuclear family, patriarchal authority, children who conform and behave. And then I began to *hear* the prevailing white "common sense" on race in the U.S. The question is, how does the (albeit divided) nation that in the 1960s and 70s committed to Civil Rights, to the War on Poverty, and to an end to discrimination, justify turning away from those commitments in the 1980s and 90s, even as the evidence mounts that the majority of African Americans are more disenfranchised and have been disproportionately affected by downturns in the economy? What I hear white people saying is that they have done all they can and that there is nothing more they can or *ought* to do. Whether couched in the most racist terms or in liberal apologies, the underlying message is the same. I believe that the Huxtables and all those other well-do-to, middle-class African American families coming into our living rooms every week are reassuring to white America because they satisfy an underlying truism: we (government and citizens) need not do anything about racial discrimination and other political issues such as affirmative action, desegregation in the schools, or housing for the poor; those opportunities have been created. The evidence is before our eyes: the existence of families like the Huxtables is "proof" that anyone who can make it, does. Racism is not an issue in the U.S.A., the failure of individual people of color to lift themselves up is. Popular culture and the academy (with its underclass construction) converge or begin to reflect each other, creating an interacting and interlocking discourse on poverty, race and social action. As an interracial people, Puerto Ricans/Latinos are implicated and bear the consequences of this discourse.

The audience response to the media, however, is not monolithic. Much has been written in the last few years on the recent emergence of Hollywood-made or -distributed films about the Chicano experience (*Stand and Deliver*, *La Bamba*, *Born in East L.A.*, etc). Latinos have been discovered in L.A! In this issue of *CENTRO*, Chon Noriega, a young Chicano scholar, analyzes not so much the films themselves, but how different audiences frame and "read" these films. There is an insider/outsider reading of the characters and of the issues films raise: is East L.A. an "inner city ghetto" (as the mainstream media framed it) or our *barrio* (as the Spanish-language press framed it)? We bring our lived experience to the movie theater; we can begin to subvert the intent of the filmmakers, rewrite the text as it were, because we see from within our history and culture and reflect our positioning in society.

In order to better understand how the media construct a racist ideology and build consensus, we need to struggle for theoretical frameworks and new paradigms. How does ideology frame the way we see the world, making particular ways of understanding race or gender seem "natural"? As Stuart Hall notes:

> "...Ideologies produce different forms of social consciousness, rather than being produced by them. They work most effectively when we are not aware that how we formulate and construct a statement about the world is underpinned by ideological premisses; when our formulations seem to be simply descriptive statements about

how things are (i.e., must be), or of what we can 'take-for granted.' 'Little boys like playing rough games; little girls, however, are full of sugar and spice' is predicated on a whole set of ideological premisses, though it seems to be an aphorism which is grounded, not in how masculinity or femininity have been historically and culturally constructed in society, but in Nature itself. Ideologies tend to disappear from view into the taken-for-granted 'naturalised' world of common sense. Since (like gender) race appears to be 'given' by Nature, racism is one of the most profoundly "naturalised' of existing ideologies."[9]

We need, then, to ask where the media are "coming from:" What are the underlying theoretical and political frameworks? What's the historical context? What are the class and gender biases? How is race framed in the media and by Hollywood? Though media analysis and critique is a relatively new field, critical contributions have been made by Stuart Hall, Ariel Dorfman, Raymond Williams, and Bell Hooks, among others. And the new feminist scholarship does not allow us anymore to ignore gender as a theoretical and historical category.

The press was originally an openly partisan press. The notion of "objectivity," a late 19th century construction, needs to be continuously demystified. Objectivity has historically been used against the disempowered and political dissidents. In recent news accounts of the war in the Middle East, objectivity in the mainstream media meant that the thousands who demonstrated against the war on Jan. 19th and 26th in Washington, D.C., were given as much air time as the handful of counter-demonstrators present—the "equal time" proviso of news management. The story was about all those people who came out against the war, including the mothers and fathers, and sisters and brothers of the men and women stationed in Saudi Arabia. That support for the war is significantly less in African American communities and that many people of color are expressing the gut feeling that if you are disenfranchised at home, you have no business dying to restore a monarchy in Kuwait, are all part of the complex reality too often being blocked and blind-sided by the mainstream media. How many of our stories are censored or told from within a racist common sense?

News coverage is also notoriously ahistorical. It can even be said to be *anti*-historical in that events are covered as discrete events that have no roots, continuity or future development. After countless hours of news reports about the war in the Middle East, how much more does the public know about the creation of Arab states and their colonial history; the development and meaning of Islam; Kuwaiti or Saudi monarchies; or Middle Eastern culture and way of life? The public's right to know has not necessarily meant the public's right to *critically* know.

Finally, media is a business in capitalist society. Who owns? Who profits? Who are the gatekeepers? are key questions. The myth of the media's objectivity often obscures the economic and political interests of media owners, and especially transnational corporations in the case of the "big" media (networks and newspaper chains). What difference does it make that Gulf and Western owns Paramount Pictures and has major holdings in the Dominican Republic? What difference does it make that the media means of production in Puerto Rico, whether television, radio or newspapers, are owned by North American capital? Read Federico A. Subervi-Vélez' article "Mass Media in Puerto Rico" in this issue to see the preponderance of that ownership. And read Luis Hernández' article to see how a consumer culture was created in Puerto Rico, the first market per capita of U.S. consumer goods.[10]

Creation of Alternative Media: The Politics of Representation

To balance the mainstream's often one-sided discourse means to create alternative media spaces. If it weren't for the alternative press—for *WBAI*, *Latino Journal*, *C-Span*, *Against the Current*, etc., there would be few other voices heard. So we need to support the alternative media, even as we struggle from within and without so that progressive media makers can do what they do better. And we need to build the infrastructures that

help disseminate an alternative discourse, taking advantage of cable television, public access and satellite technology.

In "Insider/Outsider: Making Films in the Puerto Rican Community" in this issue, Frances Negrón argues that Puerto Rican filmmakers need to make conscious how they interact with the Puerto Rican community; and that empowering community members to make their own films calls for a different interaction with community members. What Francis is articulating is that there are class, gender and racial issues to ponder over and to struggle around in our capacity as makers, community members and political actors.

Critique of the media is not and should not be an elite discourse either, relegated to the university. We have a responsibility to take up the critique *in* the community, if we are to have a liberatory agenda. People need a space for truly democratic discussions on the War, especially the high school students who are tomorrow's "volunteer" army. Those discussions can happen in churches, classrooms and community centers. We also need to explore creative ways of using media in these settings. My own experience has been that a three-minute excerpt from a documentary may be more effective in generating a critical discussion than viewing a 50-minute production. Our experience in the 1960s and 70s was that once turned on to the possibility of learning about themselves and the world around them, students and community members develop a need to know that impels them to search for more. Our responsibility as progressive film and video makers, media activists, teachers and intellectuals, is to initiate those conversations in the community, to offer critical analysis, to demystify the power of the media, to make conscious the choices mainstream media makers and controllers make, and how these decisions and privileged points of view are life and death issues for us, indeed, are political issues.

Self-Determination and the Control of the Image

We have an intimate relationship with our past. African American writer Toni Morrison speaking about *Beloved*, her novel of slavery and its consequences for Black people, put it this way in a television interview:

> "...[W]hat is really infinite is the past...in that sense there is so much back there to mine from. There is so much more to remember and to describe for purpose of exorcism and purposes of celebratory rites of passage. Things must be made, some fixing ceremony, some altar somewhere where these things can be released, thought and felt...Part of Black culture has to do with this intimacy between the self and the ancestor."

Our task is to tell our own stories, to construct our own images with the passion, dedication, understanding and nuance that comes from our lived experience and reading of history—from the inside. There are important readings to guide our understanding of the Puerto Rican experience including the *Centro*'s *Labor Migration Under Capitalism*, CEREP's work on the Island, and other sources. What we can no longer accept is for others to tell our stories or to attempt to reflect our experience badly and in an uninformed way.

The control and construction of our own images is critical in a nation that has always controlled the images and hence projected and imposed an identity upon us. Clearly the need is not to simply replace negative images with positive images: the task is to represent the complexity of our experience, the contradictions at the center of our being, the many facets of our lives. Films like Stephen Frears' *My Beautiful Launderette* (1985) and also *Samie and Rosie Get Laid* (1987), do that for the Pakistani experience in the UK, capturing the multi-layered textures of an immigrant Third World people in an advanced decaying capitalist world order. Here it is: the nostalgia and lure of the old world, the politics of race and class, conflicting gender roles and class alliances, the importance of family and the trap of it, interracial relationships, magic potions, and the spaces opened up by an alternative sexual politics. I, a Puerto Rican, first-generation woman

having grown up in New York, could relate to this. I saw my reality reflected, my contradictions and ambivalences played out, my divided loyalties and sense of displacement on celluloid. What these films said to me was that my experiences are international, and the possibility for solidarity clear and present.

For Puerto Ricans, coming from a nation still colonized or whose status remains unresolved, the centrality of self-identification, self-definition, and the self-determination of our own images is not debatable. Knowing "about" Puerto Ricans is no substitute for being Puerto Rican. Can men tell women's stories? Some, and very few at that. But even those exceptions could not begin to capture the fullness, richness, texture, pain and passion of our lives. Can we collaborate? Absolutely. But if *Eyes on the Prize II* (which paired African American and white producers) tells a story that resonates in the hearts and minds of millions of people in the U.S. and world wide, it is because the common folks who took part in the struggle and the Black yearning for freedom informs the series. And if the *CENTRO Bulletin* offers a perspective that you can find in few places at the moment, it is because we publish scholarship at the service of understanding the Puerto Rican experience. The need to do that came primarily from Puerto Ricans in the universities. Until we entered the academy, scholarship was most often at the service of understanding us as passive victims or as culturally impoverished (Oscar Lewis). And
14 lest we forget, Puerto Ricans gained access to the academy through the militant struggles of students and community folks.[11]

It is necessary that those we collaborate with understand the social relations we're embedded in, the history of domination and subordination that undermines many collaborations and the often unconscious ways people play these out. Critical questions include: Who's agenda and who's view is privileged? Who determines the content? Do people speak for themselves or are they being spoken for? What strategy is there to ensure the training and development of "minority" peoples? And who determines that strategy?

■ *¡Bomba!*

I am constantly struggling to be free of the ideological biases and assumptions I grew up with. Media is a powerful tool that can be utilized to keep us in our place, following the official line, or it can help to liberate us. It is much easier to absorb the messages and images and presuppositions fed to us than to create new roles, face the unknown, and the political uncertainty before us. The drug dealers on *Miami Vice* or in *Q & A* (1990), the images of cops who are heroically brutal, the scantily-dressed "sex things" of music videoland, and the gang members of *Colors* (1988)—too often the norm today—not only don't help much, they do us grave damage.

But a revolutionary media can also help us develop what Hall calls an anti-racist common sense; to critically evaluate and reflect our experience; and to communicate alternative points of views and ways of being in the world. Films like *My Beautiful Laundrette*, documentaries *Eyes On the Prize* (I and II), radio station *WBAI*, cable station *C-Span* and journalists like Gil Noble have made a world of difference for me. Instead of "buying into" Hollywood, how do we learn/teach equality, respect and openness, the capacity for empathy and solidarity? How can Black and Latino men be intimate with each other and with the people they love? How can we, men and women, socialize our sons and daughters so that they can more freely share in love and struggle? What images, representations of self, and role models help us organize and break through what seems like an impasse?

The challenges altogether are formidable on an individual and collective level. It is also exciting, for we *are* living in a global village, a world electronically interconnected, with images and sound capable of being transmitted to millions and millions of people. We're a long way from devising effective strategies as Hall reminds us, but if we do some of the right things, the revolutionary potential is limitless. ❐

ENDNOTES

1. The sensational, highly prejudicial media coverage given the "Cape Man" was not unlike the coverage in 198990 of the accused teens in the "Central Park jogger" case and subsequent trials, with its buzz words like "wilding," and the references to the "pack" of teens, etc.
2. Hall, Stuart. "The Whites of their Eyes, Racist Ideologies and the Media." *The Media Reader*. Eds. Alvarado, Manuel and Thompson, John O. (London: British Film Institute. 1990, p. 9). (Italics in original).
3. This according to Police Department statistics, cited in Curtis L. Taylor, "Sharpton Vows Rallies in Slaying," *Newsday*, Nov. 9, 1990, p. 8. The article was about the death of Mary Mitchell, 41, who was killed by police responding to a domestic dispute between Mitchell and her daughter in Harlem.
4. Stuart Hall observes the same phenomenon in England: "[T]he ideological construct of black people as a 'problem' population and the police practice of containment in the black communities mutually reinforce and support each other." *Op cit.* p. 10.
5. This, by the way, is an interesting development. The feminist "revolution" has brought us female cops, who for the most part fail to introduce feminist or even feminine perspectives. The latest example of this is *Blue Steel* (1990), where rookie cop Jaime Lee Curtis empties her gun at the end of the film into Ron Silver, who portrays a dispicable serial killer (in this case a white Wall street trader!) Thus, the silver screen's female cops are as *manly* as their male counterparts; nothing is gained from the entry of women into the field. Pedro Rivera's insightful comment to the overkill phenomenon, i.e., pumping multiple shots into criminals, is that "of course, because they're killing more than one person." Also, Black and Latino cops do not make a difference either. See *Q & A* (1990), where in addition to sidekick minority cops who don't add any shades of grey or alternative perspectives to social reality, we are treated to the spectacle of two minority policemen, an African American and a Puerto Rican, slinging racial epithets at each other. 15
6. The *Dirty Harry* films since the 70s, *Lethal Weapon 2* (1989), etc., and *Miami Vice* made a point of it in its final season: in the last episode of a quartet of programs in which Sonny marries a rock star who is later murdered, Sonny travels to the Bahamas where her killer has eluded "justice" and shoots him point blank.
7. Words entered the vocabulary through those struggles, representing new ways of looking at life. Words were concepts countering the Master Narrative: "oppressed minorities" encapsulated the recognition that different groups of people had been incorporated into the Republic in different ways. America's myth of an immigrant nation of people who came seeking freedom and liberty deliberately ignored that people were incorporated through force and conquest (Mexicans and Native Americans formerly called "Indians"); through brutal enslavement (Africans); and military invasion (Puerto Rico). It also recognized the persistent system of exclusion and relegation to the bottom end of the work force (Asians and all people who were not white). And Latinos, in struggles led by Chicanos on the West Coast and Puerto Ricans on the East Coast, began to make the distinction between "Americans" as a shorthand for peoples from the USA and the millions of people from Central and South America, by using North Americans for those people from the northern part of the hemisphere.
8. My special thanks to Lillian Jiménez for helping me think through these and many other issues over the course of a 17-year friendship.
9. Hall, *op cit.*, p. 9
10. Campos, Ricardo and Bonilla, Frank. "Industrialization and Migration: Some Effects on the Puerto Rican Working Class." *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 10, Summer 1976, Vol. II.
11. See Bonilla, Frank, Campos, Ricardo, and Flores, Juan. "Puerto Rican Studies: Promptings for the Academy and the Left," in *The Left Academy*. Eds. Ollman, Bertell and Vernoff, Edward. (New York: Praeger, 1986).

ERRATA
In Spring 1990 issue, Volume II, No.8, due to transcription errors, the following names were misspelled in *Televisa, Mexico's Multi-national* by John Sinclair: Azcárraga, O'Farril, González Camarena, Marco Monterrey.

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Mass Media in Puerto Rico

Federico A. Subervi-Vélez
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The most fundamental factor shaping the mass media system in Puerto Rico is the Island's status with the United States. As an outcome of the political and economic determinants of that status, which many characterize as colonial,[1] today the Island's media are (1) largely owned by capital from the United States; (2) ultimately under the judicial and regulatory authority of that country; and (3) regularly affected, in their organization and content, by the struggles concerning Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States.[2]

To provide the context for discussing Puerto Rico's contemporary media system, this article begins with a brief summary of various important events and characteristics of the Island and its people. This is followed by short descriptions of factors concerning Puerto Rico's relations with the United States which have shaped the Island's media.

Because Puerto Rico is so dominated by the U.S., the traditional "libertarian" and "social-responsibility" models could generally be applied to the Island's media system—just as these are used in describing the American media system. On the other hand, a subordinated and conflicting "developmental" model could also apply because Puerto Rico's status and development are at the core of ongoing internal and external political and economic struggles.

However, as we shall argue, the theoretical label that best describes Puerto Rico's media system is "commercial and liberal." Given the Island's longstanding democratic and capitalist structures but unique socio-cultural fabric, media functions are not focused on any centralized developmental process. Instead, the media structure and professional operations are motivated, first and foremost, by profit opportunities, which sometimes call for public service and the dissemination of cultural and educational information.

■ *Background*

Discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1493, Puerto Rico was ruled by Spain until 1898, when the Iberian nation lost

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the Spanish-American War and Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States. Within its 8,897 square kilometers (3,435 sq. mi.) Puerto Rico currently holds a population of 3.2 million characterized by a blend of Spanish, African, and Taino (the native Indian) ancestors. Also intermixed are U.S. Anglos, Cubans, and other immigrants. Racial discrimination is low but still present in some higher circles of society and may covertly affect some employment decisions.

In spite of U.S. military and civilian influence during the last 90 years, Puerto Rico's cultural heritage remains well rooted in 400 years of Spanish rule. Thus, the main language is Spanish, most people are Catholic, and many of the cultural expressions reflected in literature, the arts, music, folklore, cuisine, and family and social relations are very akin to those found throughout Latin America.

However, U.S. cultural influence is extremely strong and clearly evident. As in many parts of the world, including neighboring Caribbean nations, "American" music, fashion, and fast food can be heard, seen and savored across the Island. But because of economic and political relations, U.S. domination is more pervasive in Puerto Rico than in other countries that are independent, or neo-colonies of some foreign power.

■ *Economic, Political and Educational Foundations of the Media System*

The mass media system, described in more detail in following sections, has been significantly shaped by various factors of the Island's relations with the United States.

First, Puerto Rico is inextricably incorporated in the U.S. economic structure.[3] This process began slowly before the landing of American troops during the Spanish-American war in 1898. By 1900, massive U.S. investments in sugar estates transformed the Island into an exploitive colonial production system. Indigenous farmers and merchants were unable to compete with U.S. companies and investors as poverty ravaged until the 1940s. Then a reconstruction era program called Operation Bootstrap attracted corporations from the U.S. and other nations by offering special tax and tariff benefits as well as government support for infrastructure development. The program led to the rapid modernization of the Island with the economic base shifting from agriculture to industry. Per capita income improved as did schools, roads, health care, utilities and other services that placed Puerto Rico's standard of living higher than other neighboring islands and most Hispanic nations. Modernization also led to increased economic dependency on the U.S. (e.g., 90 percent of consumable goods are currently imported, particularly from the U.S.).

During the last three decades, however, Puerto Rico's economy has been stagnant because many investors and multinational corporations have found better places for their ventures, while the Puerto Ricans were unable to establish a solid policy of internal development. Currently, unemployment surpasses 20 percent (not counting underemployment) and over 65 percent of the population is dependent on some form of federal aid for food and other social needs.

These conditions notwithstanding, U.S. capital continues to be an intricate part of Puerto Rican manufacturing, trade, service activities—and media institutions. Furthermore, purchasing practices of many Puerto Ricans and the consumerist ideology[4] promoted by U.S. and Puerto Rican advertising agencies, have continued to keep the Island among the world's highest per capita customers of the United States. Puerto Rican and U.S. communication industries, including marketing and advertising companies, have been prompt to take advantage of these conditions, and have thus played an important part in shaping the Island's media system.

The second factor shaping Puerto Rico's media system is the constitutional arrangement with the U.S.[5] From 1898 through 1951, Puerto Rico was subjected to various repressive military and civilian statutes which limited the islanders' input into their own development. Since 1952, the association between the U.S.

and Puerto Rico is based on the Constitution of Puerto Rico (ratified by the Island's population but only after it received approval by U.S. Congress) and the Federal Relations Statute.

Puerto Rico is still ultimately subjected to the will of the U.S. Congress and is henceforth obligated to abide by the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, as well as all Congressional legislation unless it is inapplicable or it clearly excludes Puerto Rico (e.g., federal taxation and minimum wages). The obligation extends to the directives of numerous federal agencies and departments, among them the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), (which grants all licenses for broadcasting and establishes the rules that must be followed for all telecommunication operations); the U.S. Postal Service (which has jurisdiction over the mailing of all printed matter); the U.S. Customs Office (which can censor printed and other material coming in from other nations); and the Department of Commerce (which controls all international trade including that related to mass media channels and production). Therefore, aside from variations in some local laws, which cannot be incongruent with the U.S. Constitution, the state-press relationship in Puerto Rico is officially similar to the relationship between press and state in the continental United States.

The media system of Puerto Rico is also marked by a third factor: political struggles concerning Puerto Rico's political status.[6] For over 90 years, Puerto Rican political parties, their leaders, and the population, within and across social classes, have been divided on the temporary and final association Puerto Rico should have with the United States. The Partido Popular Democrático (PPD), a party that favors the current semi-autonomous status called Estado Libre Asociado (ELA) (Free Associated State but in English referred to as Commonwealth) currently holds the highest executive office and has held it for all but 12 years since Puerto Ricans were first allowed to elect their own governor in 1949. The Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP), a party which advocates statehood, won by thin margins the elections of 1968, 1976 and 1980.

The Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño, Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño, and other pro-independence parties have been represented in the Island's Senate and House, but have not had sufficient electoral following to win the governorship or any majorities in the local parliament. The electorates' inclinations toward increased autonomy and possibly independence, which prevailed at the turn of the century and up to the early 1940s, were channeled by the PPD's leadership toward the acceptance of the ELA. Overt and covert repression by insular and federal forces (local police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency) was and still is adverse to the pro-independence movements, including their expressions via the mass media. Political struggles concerning the status question have permeated both the organization (i.e., practices related to hiring and promotion of key personnel) and by extension, content of print as well as broadcast media in Puerto Rico.

The final major factor shaping Puerto Rico's media system is the educational system. School attendance is compulsory between six and 16 years of age, and English is a required subject from first grade through second year in college. Undoubtedly, this has helped keep the illiteracy rate below nine percent and increased opportunities to relate to the Anglo-Saxon and western industrialized world. However, the educational system has also been influenced by an Americanization policy.[7] Schools, especially private parochial institutions,[8] often stress U.S. history, culture, and national values, particularly those related to that country's political and economic ideology, over those related to Puerto Rico and Latin America. These conditions predispose Puerto Ricans from early childhood to accept and often prefer "American" media and their content, including consumerist ideology and dominant political perspectives.

The Print Industries

Since the 19th century, Puerto Rico has had a rich history of commercial and literary publications. At the time of this writing, there were four daily news papers, dozens of regional and community periodicals, eight locally produced magazines, and an unspecified number of literary, academic and specialized publications. Although some works have been published about the life and development of Puerto Rico's daily news papers, there is scarce documentation about the other print industries. This section first summarizes the state of newspapers and then presents a brief overview of other print industries.

20

Newspapers[9]

In early 1990, four tabloid size newspapers were being published on a daily basis in plants located in the metropolitan area of San Juan, the capital city. All four are commercial businesses financed by private investment.

Founded in 1919 as a standard size paper (it changed to tabloid on January 14, 1985), *El Mundo* was for many years the Island's most prominent independently-owned newspaper reaching a peak circulation of approximately 145,000 during the mid-1970s. Although not affiliated officially with any political party, it strongly supported the development efforts of the Partido Popular Democrático from the 1940s to early 1960s.[10] From 1958–87, it was owned by the Fundación Angel Ramos (FAR) which for over a large part of that time also operated the Island's major television station (WKAQ channel 2), an AM and FM radio station with the same call letters, and two film companies.[11] Under this ownership, *El Mundo* became increasingly characterized by its anti-labor[12] and pro-American political orientation.[13] Difficult economic times during the late 1970s through early 1980s led to the closure and sale of the various media companies owned by FAR. After being closed for almost five months (August-December 1987), *El Mundo* was the last FAR media holding to be sold. It began publishing again on January 6, 1988, after it was bought by Héctor L. González—a Puerto Rican entrepreneur—who is also president of Professional Underwriters Insurance Company which has large holdings in banking and many other businesses. Among the board of directors of the new El Mundo Corporation are prominent former cabinet members of the Partido Popular Democrático.[14] The current circulation is estimated at 112,000 copies daily and 120,000 on Sunday.

A second commercial daily newspaper of importance is *El Nuevo Día*; it has a circulation of 216,032 daily and 221,342 Sunday. Under the name of *El Día*, it was established in 1911 to serve the city of Ponce and the southern region. The name change and the wider circulation began in May 1970. But ownership has always been by the Ferré family, whose enterprises include various Puerto Rican and U.S.-based corporations, among them, the Puerto Rico Cement Company, Puerto Rico Ironworks, Banco de Ponce, Angola Investment Inc., St. Regis Paper & Bag, and Florida Lime Corporation.[15] Antonio Luis Ferré is current president of the newspaper and of many of the family enterprises; his father, Luis Antonio, a staunch advocate of statehood for Puerto Rico, was governor from 1968–72. Although not officially affiliated with the Partido Nuevo Progresista, *El Nuevo Día* expresses by way of headline wording, news selection and placements, political orientations clearly supportive of the statehood movement and the PNP and its leadership.[16] This was particularly evident when the PNP last held executive power from 1976–84.

El Vocero, with a daily circulation surpassing 240,000 on the Island and another 35,000 spread across various northeastern U.S. cities with significant Puerto Rican communities (e.g., New York, Chicago, Hartford, Boston and Cleveland), is the newspaper mostly read island wide. Founded in 1974 by Puerto Rican entrepreneurs and investors, this paper was bought in October 1985, by Caribbean International News Corporation, a company with headquarters in Puerto Rico but backed by U.S. investors. The distinctive characteristic of this tabloid is its sensationalistic coverage of violent crimes and catastrophes.[17] Few other types of news receive

any significant coverage, including political news. Nevertheless, the paper's political orientation is more conservative than liberal.

The *San Juan Star*, Puerto Rico's only English-language daily, was founded in 1959 by Cowles Publishing Corporation. It was bought in 1971 by the Scripps-Howard Corporation, owners of various multimedia outlets across the United States. The *Star*'s circulation is currently 48,000 daily and 51,000 Sunday; it had peaked at 56,000 during the late 1970s. Although this newspaper has been characterized by its independent and liberal voice on many issues affecting the Island, it has often supported pro-U.S. candidates for governor and it "projects the belief that the North American presence in Puerto Rico will finally lead to an integration with the United States."[18]

A fifth daily in recent history was *El Reportero*, published from 1980 through 1987. It was founded by a group of investors from the Island who wanted to establish a "*puertorriqueñista*" (pro-Puerto Rican) paper. Héctor L. González, the current owner of *El Mundo*, bought this paper in September 1986, and sold it June 1987, to a group of Adventist ministers.[19] On November 16, 1987, the paper ceased publication after it was unable to overcome economic difficulties even with a $100,000 government-secured loan granted in October of that year. Because this paper was a strong supporter of the PPD which was in power, this loan became a major controversy over government control of the press, particularly in the pages of *El Nuevo Día*. *El Reportero* counter-charged that *El Nuevo Día* was intent on monopolizing the media and destabilizing the banking industry.[20]

Another newspaper that requires mention is *Claridad*, a weekly published by the Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño. In 1959 it began as a bulletin of the pro-independence movement and eventually became a regular publication averaging 24 pages. For a period of 27 months (November 1974-January 1977) it was published as a daily, but financial and distribution difficulties forced a return to a weekly schedule. Circulation is estimated at about 25,000 but its political impact is far greater. It serves as an alternative voice for the supporters of independence as well as the labor movement. Its investigative reporting has exposed corporate and government improprieties, including recent government efforts to win favorable reporting from the press by having some journalists on secret payroll.[21] Because of its militant defense of the working class and its nationalist and socialist stands, the paper has been the target of numerous right-wing terrorist activities (e.g., bombings and burnings) while its staff and supporters have been subjected to extensive covert and overt surveillance and repression by both Puerto Rico and U.S. police agencies (including the FBI).[22]

Residents of Puerto Rico and neighboring islands are also served by *Caribbean Business* (circ. 43,000), a weekly with news about industrial and economic activities in the region. Moreover, there are a number of regional and community papers which publish stories about local sports, politics, culture and society. In a 1986 study, Maisonet found that most were weekly tabloids, distributed free, and had more local ads than stories. Most of these papers had been in existence for less than seven years (although two had made it past 20 years), and that circulation varies but the largest claimed 60,000 copies.[23]

Other than local news staffs and a few foreign correspondents, the Island's press depends mostly on United Press International and Associated Press for a majority of national and international news, photos and other information.[24] These two news agencies also cover local news and developments. *Claridad* relies on Agence France Presse, Prensa Latina, and other alternative sources.

As could be expected, advertising revenues in the commercial press is high, ranking second only to television. In 1984, advertising income was reported as follows (figures in millions): *El Mundo* 18.7, *El Nuevo Día* 44.0, *El Vocero* 10.6, and the *San Juan Star* 10.6.[25] Advertising in *Claridad* is minimal for two reasons: some companies do not wish to reach prospective buyers via a newspaper that

is not politically mainstream; other companies that would like to do so don't because of possible retribution by the authorities or right-wing zealots.

Although only alluded to briefly in the previous pages, it should be easily understood why in the introduction it was pointed out that these media are regularly affected in their organization and content, by the struggles concerning Puerto Rico's status. If the papers' propriety documents were available for scrutiny, these would most probably support the generally known fact that hiring and promotion decisions, especially at the higher levels, have often been influenced by the applicant's party affiliation or ideological orientation. Concomitantly, the papers' content, particularly in the headlines and layout, regularly reflect the owners' and editors' preferences regarding Puerto Rico's status with the U.S.[26]

In a systematic analysis of political coverage offered in the Island's two major newspapers (*El Mundo* and *El Nuevo Día*), Tirado found that during the 1980 elections, these dailies clearly gave greater positive coverage to the Partido Nuevo Progresista and negative coverage to parties supporting Puerto Rico's independence. The Partido Popular Democrático received constant negative coverage throughout *El Nuevo Día* while in *El Mundo* this was true mostly in headlines.[27] While specific effects of the press on government decisions has not been clearly established,[28] media exposure is clearly correlated with public opinion.[29]

◗ *Magazines and other Publications*

At the time of this writing, a number of popular commercial magazines were regularly produced in Puerto Rico. The largest of these are two weekly television guides, *Vea* (circ. 57,000) and *TV Guía* (circ. 45,000); and a women's monthly, *Imagen* (circ. 56,000). Other local productions are *Estrellitas* and *Artistas* (entertainment), *Fondismo* (track and field), *Salud Natural* (health), and *Pensamiento Crítico*, a non-commercial pro-independence political magazine.

In addition, there are a variety of government agency publications as well as an unaccounted number of non-commercial magazines and journals published at various intervals and which specialize in culture, academic affairs, civic, social, and religious life.

■ *The Telecommunications Industries*

With 111 radio stations (67 AM; 44 FM), 12 TV stations (6 VHF; 6 UHF), and 10 cable systems, Puerto Rico does not suffer any shortage of electronic media outlets. All stations have excellent broadcast quality and most programming is in Spanish. Religious organizations own 15 radio and two TV stations while government and education institutions own four radio and two TV stations. All other channels are commercial and privately owned—mostly by U.S. investors and/or corporations. This section describes the radio, television and cable industries.

◗ *Radio*

Broadcasting began in Puerto Rico in December 1922 with WKAQ radio, one of the first commercial stations in the world and the second in Latin America. Initially owned and operated by ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph), it was acquired on October 31, 1949 by Angel Ramos who already owned *El Mundo*. The first years of WKAQ radio programming were largely characterized by political rhetoric.[30] From the mid-1930s on, other stations emerged essentially for entertainment and commercial purposes; they were financed by Puerto Rican professionals and businessmen and supported by advertisements of local commercial firms and American industrial companies.[31]

Presently, radio ownership is highly concentrated. There are 12 networks and 59 corporations owned by Puerto Rican investors and operated as family businesses, with a grand total of 968 workers and managers.[32] Economic benefits are also concentrated. In 1983, the six largest stations accounted for half the income reported by all stations and showed combined sales of over $1 million. On the other hand, 25 companies had annual incomes of $300,000 or less, representing

a proportion that does not exceed 15 percent of all income for the radio industry.[33] Seventy-two percent of this income was generated by advertising agencies. Yet, due to Puerto Rico's mountainous topography, stations are dispersed and often underutilized for commercial advertising and promotion purposes.[34]

On a daily basis, over 2,500,000 people listen to radio accessing its highly specialized programming ranging from different formats of musical entertainment, news, and talk shows. Two 24-hour news networks (WKAQ-AM) and WUNO-AM) have been successful both in size of audience and economically.[35] So too have talk shows (e.g., on WPAB-FM) which provide radio listeners with an electronic outlet for expressing their public concerns and opinions about different social and political issues. Telephone access by 75 percent of the households in Puerto Rico,[36] including rural and urban areas, contributes to the success of this format. Religious programming is available on at least 15 stations while a limited amount of educational and public service programming is broadcast through government and university radio stations.

Consultants from the U.S. are widely used, as companies such as Radio Arts, Inc. from California and Bonneville Broadcast from New York advise managers about news programming trends and marketing strategies successfully proven in the United States.[37]

During the 1960s and 1970s, the FBI as part of its operation COINTELPRO, threatened some radio station owners with loss of license (granted by the FCC) if they did not stop frequent pro-independence programming. While today this type of repression may have ceased, the U.S. government has new plans for increasing its perspective over the airwaves. It is planning to install a short-wave Voice of America radio station in the southwest part of the Island. This broadcasting station will cover the entire south and central hemisphere, from the Caribbean to Argentina, making Puerto Rico a potential base for political propaganda to all of Latin America. At an estimated cost of $150 million, the station will be located in a 1,500 acre area rented from the government of Puerto Rico, which has supported the project. Transmissions are scheduled to start in 1990 originating from the central offices in Washington, D.C. However, opposition to this station has come from a variety of groups, including environmentalists worried about the flora and fauna; local residents fearing adverse health hazards from short waves; and, others who argue about a hidden political agenda of the U.S.[38]

Television

Television started in 1954 in the midst of profound economic and political transformations, and nationalist upheaval.[39] The two commercial stations that began that year (WKAQ channel 2 whose owners also owned *El Mundo* and WKAQ radio, and WAPA channel 4) would dominate the market for 30 years. By the 1960s, two additional commercial stations (WLUZ and WRIK), and a public and educational channel licensed to the government of Puerto Rico (WIPR) made the Island a regional leader in television transmissions. Today Puerto Rico continues to be a leader for it is saturated with 12 television stations and a total of 18 repeaters or smaller regional stations distributing their signals around the Island.

Since its inception, television in Puerto Rico has been dependent on U.S. technology and linked to U.S. investments. Television has been lucrative for the advertising industry, which leads to more involvement by U.S. corporations.

First, the inevitable technological dependence on engineers and consultants of General Electric, RCA, and Crosley Broadcasting Co. determined that the technical quality and transmission patterns were to be based on U.S. standards. The commercial structure of television management and programming were set with the initial program sponsorship by Frigidaire-Sylvania and Westinghouse, and the stations' temporary affiliation to ABC, CBS, NBC, and Dumont networks. Furthermore, the Island's industry represented a crucial

element of the evolving U.S. media industry:

> The Puerto Rican television stations were not only focal enterprises for the dissemination of consumerist values and capitalist penetration, but they were also buyers of programming, clients of filming and recording agencies, importers of electronic and other equipment functioning.[40]

Second, even though prices for television sets were (and are) higher than in the U.S., television quickly reached 97 percent of the population. Today this medium is available in over 865,000 households, 49 percent of which have a second set and 84 percent a color set. In number of viewers per city, Puerto Rico as a whole could be ranked 23rd in the U.S.: in TV households per capita, it is number one in the world-wide Hispanic market.[41] Thus, there is sufficient audience for the various channels and their specialized and diversified programming.

Third, given the linkage with U.S. capital and audience statistics, Puerto Rican television has become an excellent promoter for American media products and other consumer goods.[42] Imported programs started with *I Love Lucy*, *Lassie*, *The Ed Sullivan Show*, up to contemporary programs such as *Dallas*, *Magnum*, *Miami Vice*, and situation comedies such as the *Cosby Show* and *ALF*, have regularly been dubbed in Spanish and "consumed" by the viewers in Puerto Rico. Most importantly, the advertising industry spent $208.4 million for television commercials in 1986—a 69 percent increase from 1983.[43] In fact, television accounted for 54 percent of total advertising expenditures in all media during 1984.[44]

Also banking on this market are the producers of local commercials; their efforts surpass those for all other local productions and evidence the growing sophistication of the industry:

> The [television] industry is big enough to produce hundreds of television commercials yearly, make an award winning episode of *Miami Vice*, take steps toward regular production of major feature films, and begin a major studio movie starring Clint Eastwood. Like in New York and other cities, every day production on the Island is centered around the making of TV commercials. Their creation far exceeds all other productions, including locally originated soap operas, put together.[45]

With such large profits for the making and taking, it is no wonder that U.S. corporations developed keen interest in the Island's television industry which is now almost totally under their direct control. The major transition and evolution began during the early 1980s when the oldest of the Island's stations came under new owners and six U.S. corporate-owned stations began local operations. Prior to this decade, only three (and occasionally four) stations, mostly owned by Puerto Rican investors, shared the television audience and the market for advertising dollars.

In 1983, WKAQ channel 2, known as Telemundo, was acquired for $55 million from the Angel Ramos Foundation by Blair Corporation, one of the top 100 media conglomerates in the U.S. Three years later, Reliance Capitol Group, a U.S. insurance and investment company, paid $340 million for WKAQ-TV and a consort that has become a strategic part of the Telemundo Network. This network transmits local productions from Puerto Rico to several stations in the U.S., with a potential of reaching 19 million TV Hispanic households. Plans for restructuring the programming and marketing of Telemundo relate to the new role assigned to this station within the U.S. Hispanic market. Most of the programming for Telemundo Network stations in Miami, New York and Los Angeles will be provided by WKAQ-TV. The major interest of Reliance Capitol Group was to enter the Hispanic market by acquiring the most dominant and

profitable broadcast television channel in Puerto Rico with the best production studio.[46]

After various property transfers among several U.S. companies during 25 years, WAPA channel 4 was bought from Richard Moore-SNF for $144 million by Pegasus, Inc., with headquarters in Chicago. Pegasus also bought Televicentro Film division in Puerto Rico, three TV stations in the U.S., three radio stations in Montana, and interest in *Vista* magazine.[47] General Electric has been financing WAPA-TV operations and purchasing of programming to a total of $154 million.[48] Emerging from recent chaos that included several successive changes in ownership, programming and management, the interests of WAPA-TV are now focusing in local productions such as live entertainment shows, also envisioned for the Hispanic audience market in the U.S.

Lorimar-Telepictures (one of the largest independent U.S. producers and distributors of television programming), entered the Island's television market when in 1985 it rescued from bankruptcy channel 11 WKBM, a station once owned by American Colonial Broadcasting. The station was renamed WLII when it was purchased for over $6 million in a joint venture with the local owner of several shopping centers, and with Radio Caracas, the second largest Latin American television production company, especially for soap operas.

In 1985, Malrite Communications Group (which owns several radio and TV stations in the U.S.) acquired most of channel 7 for $1.3 million. This station, previously known as El Canal Puertorriqueño (the Puerto Rican Channel), when fully owned by Tommy Muñiz, a Puerto Rican TV producer and director, now has been reorganized as WSTE and its broadcasting capability enhanced by a triple antenna system for island-wide coverage of its transmissions. For six years, while under the direction of Tommy Muñiz, channel 7 survived and stood out as the station that encouraged family programming and produced local programs with a clear identity of cultural nationalism.[49]

Since 1983, seven newly established or reorganized stations have entered the market: WPRV ch. 13 (bilingual programming); WSJU ch. 18 (all English programming); WJSN ch. 24 (all news); WRWR ch. 30 (affiliated to Univision; formerly the Spanish International Network); WMTJ ch. 40 (private, educational); WECN ch. 64 (religious, educational); and WUJA ch. 58 (religious).

Channel 13 is owned by Leake Industries and Puerto Rican investor Carmina Méndez; channel 18 is owned by a group of new shareholders headed by a U.S. Virgin Islands investor. Using satellite reception, the former has mixed programming of local news and U.S. programs from ABC and Fox Broadcasting; the latter focuses on sports, news and movies from NBC. Both target the English-speaking or bilingual households with higher than average incomes.

Multimedia Television is the parent corporation of channel 24 locally owned by Puerto Rican investor Franklin Delano López; $8 million were spent to organize and manage this station which reaffirms the growing trend towards programming specialization. The recent proliferation of regional newspapers and specialized magazines responding to local and community information needs, seems to have indicated the market's receptiveness for this format. Channel 24 has been producing and transmitting local and regional documentaries and news, occasionally about Central America and the Caribbean.

Owned by Bay Industries, a Miami-based group of investors, channel 30 is an affiliate of Univision, formerly Spanish International Network, which was recently bought by Hallmark Corporation.[50] It re-transmits by satellite Hispanic programming originating mostly in the U.S. Audience interest and concerns about what is happening to the Hispanic population in the U.S., and about contemporary events in Latin America has provided a justification for this specialization. Bay Broadcasting has been financing part of the channel's operation through telemarketing, since advertising dollars have been slowly

redistributed to the newer stations.

In 1980, the Ana G. Méndez (AGM) Foundation and its Metropolitan University started channel 40 as a private educational and cultural station. It offers programs unavailable on commercial stations or the government educational station: 50 percent telecourses for university credit, and the other half a mix of U.S. Public Broadcasting System (PBS), Spanish and English, and local productions. The latter include program series of Puerto Rican distinguished personalities and historical events, local news, and discussions of public issues. The PBS affiliation allows WMTJ to receive some federal funding which supplements the $1.9 million assignment by the AGM Foundation, the telecourse registration fees, advertising and promotion income, as well as revenues from program sponsorship by various industries. Although now limited to the San Juan metropolitan area and the Southwestern part of Puerto Rico, channel 40 plans to cover the entire Island and to consolidate its title as the "different television" station.[51]

The other educational station, WIPR-TV channel 6, and its re-transmitter for the western region channel 3 are owned by the government of Puerto Rico. The first educational and public broadcasting system in all Latin America, WIPR-TV was licensed to the Department of Public Instruction in 1954 by the FCC. Along with the WIPR-AM and FM stations, the public broadcasting system was designed to be an educational and cultural instrument for the promotion of national culture, not for partisan propaganda. However, this broadcasting system has not been insulated from direct political influence because the Department of Public Instruction has always been an extension of the dominant party in power. Throughout the last years, WIPR-TV has survived with a restricted budget of $3.3 million annually, thus facing economic and technical deterioration. Beside some local productions, part of WIPR-TV's programming comes, mostly in English, from PBS.

In an attempt to stimulate the technical and economic efficiency of this government broadcasting system, restructure its educational mission, and upgrade its programming and production, a new law was signed on January 24, 1987 that authorized the transfer of the system from the Department of Public Instruction to the Puerto Rico Telephone Authority, a public corporation. Acting as a subsidiary of the Telephone Authority, the newly created Corporación de Radiodifusión Pública (CRP) de Puerto Rico, plans to operate separately and independently in order to establish itself as a production and co-production business at the national and international level. It will also act as a dubbing center for PBS English-language programming distributed to Latin America. The redefined goal of the CRP is to promote social, cultural and artistic values of the Puerto Rican community at a national and regional level with informative and entertainment programming that can be an alternative to commercial radio and television.[52]

Puerto Rico's advertising industry is an integral part of the changing media situation as it tries to improve its impact by way of the new television channels and the programming rearrangements of older stations.[53] The presence of more stations competing for approximately the same promotion budgets has forced a redistribution of advertising dollars, gradually restructuring audience segmentation. This proliferation of channels has brought a tendency towards specialization of programming, targeting particular segments of the television audience. For the audience, the abundance of television stations means greater possibilities to choose from a larger amount and different types of programming. The older stations—WKAQ, WAPA, WLII, WSTE—have been restructuring their similar conventional programming and increasing their local productions, with new stations and cable exploring specialized programming arrangements.[54]

Most likely, the growing interest of U.S. media companies and foreign

investors in the Island's television industry resides in exploring Puerto Rico as a testing ground for the U.S. Hispanic market. There is a potential of some 300 cable television systems that provide Spanish programming for U.S. Latinos. The possibility of creating a super station in Puerto Rico to feed these cable systems by satellite with large scale productions at lower costs, has been considered by several stations.[55] From 60 to 70 percent of WAPA-TV and WKAQ-TV programming is produced in Puerto Rico.[56] Some argue that growing competition will improve the quality of local productions.

Cable Television

Starting in 1969, the Puerto Rico Public Service Commission (PSC) established local jurisdiction over the cable system on the Island, but it wasn't until 1972 that Puerto Rico was first granted power over its cable television industry when the FCC established the rules for shared jurisdiction and local control of cable with states and municipalities. Following standard rules set by the FCC, the jurisdiction fell under the PSC, which centralizes franchise granting and oversees cable development, but does so without involving the Island's municipal governments (towns and cities).[57]

However, as early as 1965, ITT was involved in cable television in Puerto Rico as one of its subsidiaries, the Federal Electric Company, owned P.R. Cablevision Certified Signal Corporation (PRCCSC)—a 12 channel system that operated in San Juan.[58] PRCCSC supplied TV sets and provided advertising, news, and tourist information as part of their services to hotels in the area. The system operated unauthorized until the PSC granted it provisional permission in 1968.

In June 1970, the PSC denied PRCCSC a petition to maintain and expand its system. The franchise was given instead to Cable Television Corporation of Puerto Rico (CTCPR), owned in part by Alfredo Ramírez de Arrellano (a Puerto Rican investor) and Herbert S. Hoffman and Associates (from the U.S.); their initial capital investment was $10.6 million. This decision was based upon the new company's promise to reserve channels for public access and educational use, which to date have not been fully implemented.[59]

When it received its franchise in 1971, the CTCPR became the first authorized commercial system of this type on the Island. Thirteen additional companies have been franchised since 1978 in anticipation that by the early 1990s cable services will be available in 85 percent of the municipalities. There is a tendency toward cable ownership concentration, where major stockholders are corporate absentees. Eight companies, mostly American-owned businesses, operate 10 cable systems serving 40 communities and covering 55 percent of the Island's municipalities.

According to recent data from the Public Service Co.nmission, in December 1988 there were 197,170 subscribers for basic cable services, representing a penetration of 22.7 percent of TV households. Subscribership is highly concentrated in the franchised communities of the San Juan metropolitan area, where more than 50 percent of the homes have access to cable.

Although cable television was authorized in 1971, it was not until the end of the decade that it became more popular and a greater variety of imported channels were offered. In 1980, revenue for the pioneering company reached $6.6 million, with $12.3 million projected for 1982.[60]

Most of the cable systems in Puerto Rico are controlled by U.S. media corporations reflecting a pattern similar to that found in the television industry and other high technology corporations on the Island. In 1977, CTCPR was bought by Harris Cable Corp. (among the largest multiple system operators in the United States in 1983).[61] The system has been known since then as Cable Television of Greater San Juan. After it rapidly expanded services in the metropolitan area, Harris sold the business for $149 million in December 1986 to Century-ML Cable Corporation, a partnership formed by Century

Communications Corporation (owner of cable systems in 22 other states and of multiple radio stations), and by ML Media Partners (a subsidiary of Merrill Lynch Investments, with several cable systems in California).

One of the other systems is owned by Cross Country Cable of Puerto Rico, a corporation which has an undisclosed percentage of ownership by Telecommunications, Inc., the largest and first multiple system operator in the U.S. Prestige Cable System, owner of Cable TV of Nordeste, owns other cable systems in Maryland and Virginia. Only a couple of local companies managed by Puerto Ricans—Caguas Cable and TelePonce—have entered the cable television market; but they are financed by U.S. capital. The former, for example, has been financed by Hundred East Credit Corporation, the largest non-bank lender to the cable television industry in the U.S.[62]

In the social and cultural context of Puerto Rico, public access channels could be instrumental outlets for a greater democratization of communication and a wider participation of the audience.[63] Community involvement and participation has been lacking throughout the franchising process. In the absence of local cable policies requiring channels for public access, the commercial model for the implementation of cable television has dominated and prevailed, thus limiting the possibility of using cable channels for culturally diversified programming and community expression.[64]

The combination of cable television with videocassette recorders (VCRs) has brought additional segmentation of the broadcast television audience. Video clubs on the Island have been decreasing from more than 1,000 in 1985 to 690 outlets in December 1987, while household penetration of VCRs has been estimated at 49 percent.[65] VCRs represent an additional alternative to broadcast television, and in some cases to pay movie channels of cable TV. Rapid propagation of VCRs has also provided competition to many movie theaters, where the audience attendance has dropped 40 percent—or by 3.7 million—between 1980 and 1984.[66] Movies for rent are often the same second-run movies being offered at many theaters.

■ *Programming and the Television Audience*

The proliferation of television stations could be changing TV audience habits, although a greater amount of programming could also be leading to difficulty in program selection, thus leaving audience preference for a particular station unaltered. In 1982, television viewers had 350 hours of broadcast television available every week, but today this number has already doubled and continues to increase with the programming of 12 television stations.[67]

In the period from 6:00 AM to 12:00 PM, there are more than 322 weekly programs. A breakdown of these (excluding religious and all news channels), shows the percentage distribution as follows: 24% movies, 19% children's, 13% series, 9% local live entertainment, 9% soap operas, 8% news, 7% educational, 7% sports, and 5% public affairs. Audience accumulation comes from four types of programs: soap operas, movies, series, and local live entertainment shows. Every night, from 7:00 to 8:00, 46 percent of the total TV audience are glued to the tube watching soap operas.[68]

Generally, the majority of cable systems retransmit broadcast channels in what is called "basic service," as a way to improve air wave television reception. Several super stations from Atlanta, Chicago and New York are included in this basic service. For an additional sum, more than 10 U.S. channels, mostly of specialized programming, including only movies channels are provided.[69] More than 75 percent of this programming, besides being for entertainment, is in English. Out of these channels, only Galavision, from Mexican Televisa, transmits in Spanish. It was formerly a pay channel, but is now part of the basic service.

Due to the fact that subscription fees can range from an average of $12.00 per month for basic service to $45.00 for

the sum of the pay channels, the subscribers of cable television comprise an upscale urban audience. The growing acceptance of cable television indicates audience interest and enjoyment of imported English programming. Astroff has argued that cable television in Puerto Rico represents one more strong element of Americanization, of promoting the "American way of life" and the presence of English in the daily lives of Puerto Ricans.[70]

Audience research supports the view that cable subscribers acquire the service to have a wider choice of channels and to have the advantage of watching specific English-language programs. However, by the early 80s cable subscribers primarily viewed Spanish-language programs and sought improvement in their broadcast television reception. The four local broadcasting stations carried then by the San Juan cable system (channels 2, 4, 6, and 7) collectively surpassed all other cable television channels in viewership.[71]

Nevertheless, comparing program language in 1971 and 1987, Spanish has been reduced to a minority language within the cable system with over 80 percent of its programming in English.[72] The political implications of this are starting to be studied and certainly merit close scrutiny.

The principal markets for advertising are women, considered to be decisive in purchasing goods, and adults 18–34 years, whose consumer needs are larger; hence the abundance of soap operas on almost all channels, movies and live entertainment shows. Most of the films and series are American, while soap operas are imported from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela.

One of the most watched local programs ever was *A Millón* (on air from 1986–89), a live game and entertainment show that at times accounted for a viewership of 1.5 million on Sunday afternoons. There were four programs of this type, and proved so successful that they were being considered for retransmission to several Hispanic television stations in the U.S.[73] Media critics have questioned the ethics of these programs because of audience participant behavior. Audience members are always willing to do any preposterous performance in exchange for a gift or prize.[74] The large number of unemployed persons who participate in these programs and the consumerist values promoted through Puerto Rican society may be a partial explanation of this phenomenon. As popular as such programs were, they are now being phased out because of rising production costs and programming restructuring.

Television audience measurements have been controversial for many years because Mediafax (Stanford Klapper) reports have allegedly been biased in favor of Telemundo, the most dominant station in the Puerto Rican market.[75] In May 1987, out of the 30 most popular programs reported by Mediafax, 25 were broadcast on Telemundo, positioning the station with a 48 percent household share. Mediafax had been measuring audiences on a quarterly basis using diaries as a technique and the household as a unit of measurement. TV stations, ad agencies and clients pressured for improved procedures. The newly reorganized Mediafax Inc., now separated from Stanford Klapper will soon establish a new metered service to record demographic as well as tuning data.[76]

Little has been said about how the electronic media are regularly affected by the struggles regarding the Island's status. Aside from the U.S. government's direct repressive activities some years ago and the current efforts to establish a Voice of America radio station, there are other indicators. Hiring decisions often continue to be influenced by party or ideological orientations. Also, public service or news programs that may be politically controversial (for the party in power) have been subject to pressures for change or cancellation. Building on the experiences of past studies,[77] future analysis should certainly scrutinize the political environment and TV content.

Some final comments are appropriate regarding the growing trends of the telecommunications environment in Puerto Rico. First, the mid-1980s have

witnessed the proliferation of commercial and domestic satellite antennas for additional television programming reception and two-way data satellite transmissions. Today, clients for these across the Island surpass 3,000, and include colleges, private corporations and individuals.

Second, there are plans by the Puerto Rican government to make the Island a strategic point for telecommunications in the Caribbean. There were plans to install by 1989 a fiber optic cable between Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Florida, costing $30 million. The fiber optics system, to be installed by AT&T, will allow a traffic of more than 4,000 simultaneous telephone conversations and provide new services such as data communications, electronics banking, video conferencing and videotext."[8]

Third, during a recent 11-nation Caribbean Conference of the Association of National Telecommunications, Puerto Rico was identified as the axis for a Caribbean telecommunications system. The Island was seen as having a dominant economic role in the Caribbean Basin Initiative, where telecommunications will be a determinant factor for regional integration.

■ *Conclusion*

The media system described in the previous pages can be classified as generally fitting the "commercial and liberal" framework. Although ultimately under the judicial and regulatory authority of the U.S. government, it is based on a "free" economy with few government constraints on financial structures. While telecommunication industries have to contend with requirements to serve the community and society at large, these demands are never incongruent with the goal of maximizing audiences and profits. Certainly, the influx of U.S. capital and corporate involvement face no major legal restrictions, only competition between local and foreign entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the system faces varying influences which stem from different political and economic interests. Under the same capitalist umbrella, foreign capital prefers an economy that is dependent upon external products, be these material or cultural goods and services.

Ownership of the media can certainly help shape economic messages and their ideology. However, even if the media are owned by national capital, there is no guarantee that the predominant capitalist-consumerist ideology of the content will be much different. The only expectation is that local owners would be more sensitive to the representation and maintenance of the Island's cultural diversity and heritage.

As is the case elsewhere, governments and governors of Puerto Rico have recognized the potential influence of the media. But they have usually accepted constitutional limitations on interfering with the press. When antagonistic relations between press and state do surface, it is most often observable between the state and a particular reporter, his/her newspaper, or a broadcast news or political satire program. In Puerto Rico, this has meant clashes between Commonwealth leaders and the pro-statehood press, and between the pro-statehood leaders and the pro-Commonwealth press. The pro-independence press (and followers) have usually been subjected to severe treatment from both Puerto Rican and U.S authorities and other media.

In sketching the mass media system of Puerto Rico, references have been made to a number of writings. But much more systematic or empirical analyses are needed on all types of issues and topics. The starting point should be documentation of the changing economic structure of the broadcast and cable industries in particular. At the content level, analyses are needed of the programming changes brought by new patterns in ownership; messages about different development strategies have never been analyzed systematically.

What we believe requires the most urgent attention is comprehensive research about the cultural impact of the media, especially in light of the proliferating new technologies and the imported

programming these are bringing directly into Puerto Rican homes. For example, how is this programming affecting people's language skills and their attitudes toward the Island's culture? There is also the need to study the impact of old and new media on Puerto Rico's political life. Marketing surveys are regularly conducted and every four years pollsters inquire about preferences for candidates and/or parties. Yet few studies have cared to look at how the changes in programming, and the ideology of the news and information outlets, influence the political knowledge, attitudes, and/or behavior of Puerto Ricans.

Inadequate curricula for communications may be responsible in part for this lacuna. But this is changing rapidly as more interest is developed in and about the mass media and communication in Puerto Rico. As authors of the first chapter ever to present an overview of the Island's media system, we hope to have made at least a small but valuable contribution in this direction.

In the months and years to come, numerous changes in the print, broadcast and cable companies operating in Puerto Rico can be expected. The devastation caused by Hurricane Hugo left its mark on the infrastructure of various broadcast stations and the now more impoverished population. The steep competition between Puerto Rican and United States businesses will continue to affect the number and diversity of media outlets. There will also be many modifications, possibly in the media system itself, that will be determined by the economic and the political relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. The process and outcome of the plebiscite on the status of Puerto Rico (tentatively scheduled for 1991) is certainly worth careful scrutiny as the media are expected to play a major role in the electoral process in which islanders will choose between some form of independence, statehood or commonwealth. We foresee that whatever the results of that plebiscite, many notable changes will be forthcoming in Puerto Rico's mass media. ■

ENDNOTES

1 See Raymond Carr, *Puerto Rico: A Colonial Experiment* (New York: Random House, 1984). This work includes an extensive bibliography on the subject of Puerto Rico's political status with the U.S. For a summary of critical perspectives on the Puerto Rican colonial condition, see EPICA Task Force, *Puerto Rico: A People Challenging Colonialism* (New York: EPICA Task Force, 1976).

2 Gordon Lewis, in his critical assessment of the Island's status and socio-economic condition, makes numerous references to the condition and problems of the mass media. See *Notes on the Puerto Rican Revolution: An Essay on American Dominance and Caribbean Resistance* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974) and *Puerto Rico: Libertad y Poder en el Caribe* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Edil, 1969).

3 Ample analysis of Puerto Rico's economic relation with the U.S. can be found in Carr, *op. cit.* and many of the works he cites. See also, James Petras with Juan Manuel Carrión, "Contradictions of Colonial Industrialization and the Crises in 'Commonwealth' Status: The Case of Puerto Rico," in *Critical Perspectives on Imperialism and Social Class in the Third World* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

4 See Carlos Buitrago Ortiz, *Ideología y Conservadurismo en el Puerto Rico de Hoy* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Bayoan, 1972).

5 See Carr, *op. cit.* and works cited therein.

6 See Carr, *op. cit.* and works cited therein.

7 See Charles J. Beirne, *The Problem of Americanization in the Catholic Schools of Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Universitaria, 1975) and Aida Negrón de Montilla, *Americanization in Puerto Rico and the Public School System* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Universitaria, 1975).

8 In addition to efforts via their schools, Protestant churches have contributed to Puerto Ricans' Americanization in more direct ways. See Charles J. Beirne, "La Iglesia Protestante y la Americanización de Puerto Rico," *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 18 (September-December, 1974).

9 The principal sources on the history of the Puerto Rican press are Antonio S. Pedreira, *El Periodismo en Puerto Rico* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Edil, 1969) and José A. Romeu, *Panoroma del Periodismo Puertorriqueño* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1985). Other important analyses and overviews of the press during the last half of this century are found in Robert Anderson, *La Prensa en Puerto Rico* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Comisión de Derechos Civiles, 1977-006E); Manuel Ríos Ocaña, *El Ingrato Oficio: Introducción al Estudio del Periodismo* (Miami, Florida: Rex Press Inc., 1970); and Pablo Tirado Mercado, *Anatomía del Periodismo Puertorriqueño* (Mexico: B. Costa-Amic, 1974). The structure of three Puerto Rican newspapers was documented in Federico A. Subervi-Vélez, *La Estructura de Tres Periódicos Diarios de Puerto Rico, El Mundo, The* San Juan Star, *y* El Nuevo Día, *a Principios de 1974* (Masters Thesis, University of Puerto Rico, 1974). Additional information on the paper's structure is found in Richard T. Boyle-Reyes, *Los Medios de Comunicación, Política Pública y la Ideología Predominante* (Masters Thesis, University of Puerto Rico, 1968). There are also two extensive bibliographies on the press and other media in Puerto Rico: Aura A. López de Díaz, *El Periodismo en Puerto Rico: Una Bibliografía de Libros, Artículos de Periódicos, Artículos de Revistas y Otros Materiales Relacionados* (Río Piedras, Escuela de Comunicación Pública, Universidad de Puerto Rico: Unpublished mimeo, 1978); and Federico A. Subervi-Vélez, *Bibliografía Sobre Los Medios de Comunicación Masiva de Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Unpublished mimeo, 1976). A recent book of essays about journalism in Puerto Rico is *Administración Universidad Interamericana, El Periodismo en Puerto Rico: Reflexiones, Reseñas y Ensayos* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial Librotex, 1987).

10 Anderson, *op. cit.*

11 Subervi-Vélez, 1974, *op. cit.*

12 Awilda Palau, *Prensa Comercial: Posiciones de Clase Ante La Situación Laboral* (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico: Sagita, 1979).

13 Ríos Ocaña, *op. cit.*

14 See list of *El Mundo*'s board of directors on p. 1 of the paper's January 8, 1988, edition.

15 Anderson, *op. cit.*

16 See Anderson, *op. cit.*; Boyle-Reyes, *op. cit.*; Magdalena García Ramírez, *La Editorialización de Noticias Políticas en los Periódicos* El Mundo *y* El Nuevo Día *en un Año de Elecciones en Puerto Rico, 1980* (Masters Thesis, University of Puerto Rico 1978); and Gabriel Moreno Plaza, "El Sentido Ideológico de la Prensa en Puerto Rico," *Revista Puertorriqueña de Investigaciones Sociales* 1 (July-December, 1976): 26–29.

17 For an extensive content analysis of how the daily press covered crime stories between July 1, 1974 and June 30, 1975, see Technical Services of Puerto Rico, Inc., "La Violencia y los Medios de Comunicación," Chapter 2 in Vol. IX of *Etiología de la Violencia en Puerto Rico* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: author, 1977). See also Anderson, *op. cit.*; and Victor A. Marreo Peña, *Estudio Comparativo de Tres Diarios Puertorriqueños: Una Semana en la Prensa de Puerto Rico* (Masters Thesis, University of Puerto Rico, 1975).

18 Anderson, *op.cit.*, 25, our translation.

19 González sold this business due to his discouragement upon the death of the paper's president in the 1987 New Year's fire at the Dupont Plaza Hotel; telephone interview with Jesús Benítez, former director of editorials for *El Reportero*; February 22, 1987.

20 For *El Nuevo Día*'s perspective, see Lisette Nuñez, "Censuran la ayuda a *El Reportero*," p.3; "Hernández Colón la 'bendice'," p.5; "Señalan una violación constitucional del Gobierno," p.5; *El Nuevo Día*, October 9, 1987; ; Eva I Lizardi, "El Gobierno mantiene con vida a *El Reportero*," *El Nuevo Día*, October 14, 1987, p.7. For *El Reportero*'s perspective, see Editorial Staff, "Alegan quiso ser 'heredero'," "Quiere demostrar a su padre como se ejerce el poder," *El Reportero*, October 9, 1987, p.3; Editorial Staff, "Utilizan periodistas para desestabilizar la banca del país," p.2; "Aceptan favores por manipular información, " p.3; *El Reportero*, October 10, 1987; Editorial, "El verdadero planteamiento," *El Reportero*, October 10, 1987, p.15; News Services, "Critican el afán monopolístico de *El Nuevo Día*," *El Reportero*, October 13, 1987; Josué Cancel "*El Nuevo Día*, Berríos, Rexach, Corrada, " 20, *El Reportero*, October 14, 1987, p.4.

21 See Editorial staff, "Se destapa contrato periodista-Fortaleza," *Claridad*, October 9–15, 1987, p.2; Editorial, "Contra el control del gobierno," *Claridad*, October 16–22, 1987, p.2. Criticism of journalists on government payrolls was also criticized in other newspapers, e.g., Agustín Muñoz, "Urge la lista de periodistas con 'amarres' al gobierno," *El Nuevo Día*, October 12, 1987, p.10. See also Editorial staff, "Alegado periodista era 'chota' de la Policía," *Claridad*, October 3–9, 1987, p.5.

22 For more details about the life and problems of this alternative newspaper, see Awilda Palau, *Veinticinco Años del Periódico Independentista* Claridad *y su Visión de 68 Problemas Sociales Puertorriqueños* (Doctoral thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1986). Expected publication in 1989 by Editorial Universitaria, University of Puerto Rico.

23 Ivette Maisonet, Instructor at the Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, Departamento de Comunicación; from an unpublished manuscript shared with the authors.

24 See Boyle-Reyes, *op.cit.*; Subervi-Vélez, 1974, *op. cit.*; Miguel J. Rodríguez, "Problema de la Dependencia de la Prensa Escrita en Puerto Rico de las Agencias Informativas Externas," (Unpublished paper for graduate seminar in Escuela de Planificación: University of Puerto Rico, 1970); Giovana Scarano Fiol, *La Función de las Agencias Noticiosas en la Prensa de Puerto Rico* (Masters Thesis, University of Puerto Rico, 1975).

25 See Rosita Marrero, "¿Competencia...Qué Competencia?," *Logos* (March, 1986): 4.

26 See Anderson, *op. cit.*; Boyle-Reyes, *op. cit.*; García Ramírez, *op. cit.*; and Moreno Plaza, *op. cit.*

27 Tirado García, *op. cit.*, 86. For a study which contains valuable data about political ads in the Puerto Rican papers during the 1980 elections, see Aline Frambes-Buxeda de Alzérreca, "Economía, Publicidad y Comicios de 1980 en Puerto Rico," *Hómines* 8 (1984): 255–289.

28 Julio Hernández Martínez, *Influencia de la Prensa en las Decisiones del Gobierno de Puerto Rico* (Masters Thesis, University of Puerto Rico, 1983).

29 Luis Nieves Falcón, *La Opinión Pública y las Aspiraciones de los Puertorriqueños* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Universitaria, 1971).

30 The first program of WKAQ was sponsored by the political party La Alianza for broadcasting a political assembly in San Juan. See Rafael Benítez, *La Publicidad en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, P.R. Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1985).

31 *Ibid.* American companies which had already initiated their economic incursion in Puerto Rico looked at the emerging electronic medium in terms of its commercial role for advertising and creating a market for their products in the Island. The first sponsors for radio programs in Puerto Rico were Esso, Coca-Cola, and Atlas Tires.

32 See José J. Villamil, "Todavía Hay Espacio para Crecer," *Logos* (August, 1986): 15–17.

33 Villamil, *op. cit.* See also Junta de Salario Mínimo, Departamento del Trabajo y Recursos Humanos, *Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico*, 1985, p.42.

34 Ibid. Compared to the large advertising expenditures in television, only 3% to 5% of the media budget for advertising agencies and pubic institutions is allocated for radio promotions. Thus, the Island's Radio Broadcasters Association recently requested that the Government agencies distribute their promotion budgets more equally among all the media in order to benefit the radio industry. See "Reclamo de los Radiodifusores," *Logos* (August, 1986).

35 See Madelyn Vega Ortiz. "Comentarios en torno al periodismo radial en Puerto Rico," in Administración Universidad Interamericana, *El Periodismo en Puerto Rico: Reflexiones, Reseñas y Ensayos* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial Librotex, 1987).

36 There are 640,000 telephone subscribers to the telephone company for the entire Island. More than 82,000 families enjoy telephone service in approximately 400 rural communities.

37 Pedro Tocuyo, "Consultores Importados," *Logos* (November, 1987): 14.

38 See Ralph Olsen, "Voice of America station tabled for lack of funding," *The San Juan Star*, July 22, 1987, p.1 and 20. Although the project has been delayed for at least two years for lack of funding, installation plans continue.

39 On March 2, 1954, the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party shoot-out in the U.S. Congress took place. A few weeks before, the first television station WKAQ TV had made its appearance. For a broader perspective of historical analysis of television in the political context of Puerto Rico, see: Héctor Vélez, *Television and Culture: The Case of Puerto Rico* (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1983): 30–60.

40 *Ibid.*, 58.

41 Considered a consumer society, more than a productive one, Puerto Rico has the highest economic standard in Latin America and the Caribbean. But according to a recent study, Puerto Ricans are consuming much more than what they can afford and have an indebtedness of almost $7,000 million more than the total personal available income. It was also indicated that large sectors of the middle class have a substantial part of their income owed to financial corporations and banks, and Sears, JC Penny, Visa and Mastercharge credit cards. See Bienvenido Olavarría, "Empeñando el bolsillo puertorriqueño," *El Nuevo Día*, December 14, 1987, pp. 3–4.

42 Media critics have pointed to the saturation level of advertisements in television. While in the U.S. networks still adhere to the National Association of Broadcasters code encouraging advertising time limits of 9.5 minutes per hour, in Puerto Rico, advertising blocks have gone up to 17–18 minutes per hour and even more. See Jane Wagner, "Too many different spots raise TV irritation level," *Caribbean Business*, Oct. 15, 1987, pp. 32–33.

43 Advertising expenditures on all stations by product category reveal that alcoholic beverages and beers (including malts) together supply the largest amount of the advertising dollars for television. Schools, records and books, and communication media followed in rank order. See Publish Records Service, *TV Competitive Network Report*, San Juan, P.R., 1986.

44 *Logos* (March 1986).

45 Robert Sacco, "Television Action," *The San Juan Star*, June 1, 1986, p.2.

46 WKAQ-TV, Telemundo, has had 45–50% average audience share during the past four years. Out of the top 20 TV programs, by audience ranking, 15 belonged to WKAQ-TV. See *Mediafax*, November 1987.

47 *Vista* is a Sunday magazine dealing with topics of interest for and about Latinos in the U.S. and the Hispanic world. It is a monthly insert in many U.S. newspapers.

48 See Elsa Fernández Miralles, "El mercado no resiste tantos canales," (Serie La TV por dentro,

Parte 2), *El Nuevo Día*, March 25, 1987, p.78.

49 See Roberta Astroff, "Communication and Contemporary Colonialism: Broadcast Television in Puerto Rico," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* (6): 11-26.

50 See George Ramos, "Owners to sell KMEX-TV, four sister stations," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1986, part IV, pp.1-2; and Steve Beale, "Turmoil and growth. New ownership transforms Spanish-language TV," *Hispanic Business*, December 1986, pp. 48–52, 89–92.

51 See Ramón Arbona, "Canal 40: Un servicio público que compite," *Logos* (April 1986): 15–16.

52 Elsa Fernández Miralles, "Las alternativas culturales," (Serie La TV por dentro, Parte 3) *El Nuevo Día*, March 26 1987, p.104.

53 Wagner, *op. cit.*, 32–33.

54 See Rosita Marrero, *op. cit.*, 4–5 and 38.

55 A local soap opera of 100 episodes can cost $500,000. Armando Izquierdo (Independent TV producer). La promoción y producción en la TV de eventos especiales, American Marketing Association (UPR Collegiate Chapter) Conference, San Juan, P.R., September 12, 1987. Also see Jane Wagner, "Local Television Explosion Fueled by Heavyweights," *Caribbean Business*, Jan. 22, 1987, pp. 40–41.

56 Bill Pérez, (News Manager, WAPA-TV). "El impacto de la promoción en el campo televisivo," American Marketing Association (UPR Collegiate Chapter) Conference, San Juan, September 12, 1987. 35

57 For the early history of cable television in Puerto Rico, see Luis Muñoz Argüelles and Pedro Miranda Corrada, "La cable televisión en Puerto Rico," *Revista Jurídica de la Universidad de Puerto Rico* 42 (1974): 529–556.

58 Puerto Rico Public Service Commission, Resolution and Order, Cases Nos. FC-3, FC-5, and FC-8; June 1970.

59 See Public Service Commission, *op. cit.*, Cases FC-4 and FC-8.

60 Alan Patureau, "Cable TV is hot to go in Puerto Rico," *The San Juan Star*, March 8, 1981.

61 *Broadcasting/Cablecasting Yearbook*, 1983.

62 Public Service Commission, Case FC-27, (Letter from Hundred East Corporation, Jan 11, 1985), Puerto Rico.

63 Nitza M. Hernández-López, "Cable Television in Puerto Rico: A Study of the Public Policy in Communications," Presentation before the panel on "Communications Media and Politics," symposium of the Study of Puerto Rican Politics, UPR, March 19, 1987 (Unpublished manuscript).

64 *Ibid.*

65 Mediafax, Inc., *February 1989 Audience Report*, Santurce, P.R.

66 Pablo Trinidad, "Struggling movie theaters start on comeback trail," *Caribbean Business*, Dec. 3, 1987, pp.1–4.

67 Salvador Rivera (Media Director at McCann Erickson), "Audience Share and TV Dollars," *Logos*, (March 1986): 35.

68 *Ibid.*

69 Some of these channels include VH-1 and MTV, music-video programming; ESPN, sports; Lifetime, health and nutrition; CNN, all news; Arts and Entertainment, a performing arts; Nickelodeon, quality children's programming; C-SPAN, U.S. Congressional hearings; CBN, religious; and pay movie channels like HBO, Showtime, Disney and Bravo.

70 Roberta Astroff, "A Case Study on New Technologies and Social Structure: Class, Language and Cable Television in San Juan," Presented at the 34th Annual Conference of International Communication Association, San Francisco, May 1984.

71 Clapp and Mayne, Inc., "San Juan Metropolitan Area Cable TV Audience Study," (San Juan, P.R., October 1982).

72 Eliut F. Flores-Caraballo, "The Role of New Communication Technologies in the Cultural and Political Processes of Puerto Rico," in *Cultural Identity* (Main Papers, Vol. 2, IAMCR Proceed-

ings, Facultad de Ciencias de la Información, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 1988), 1559–1596.

73 The annual budget for this and similar programs in other channels is $1.04 million. See Vanessa Droz, "Los premios tienen su precio," *Logos* (October 1986): 12.

74 See Bienvenido Olavarría, "¿Perjudiciales los concursos de la TV?," *El Nuevo Día*, December 29, 1985, p. 2. Also see Fernando García Castaño, "TV: El amargor del dulce," *El Nuevo Día*, January 9, 1986, p. 55.

75 In 1982, WTLZ-TV, know as El Canal Puertorriqueño, filed a suit against Stanford Klapper & Associates (Mediafax) for damages totaling $13,800,000. The station owner, Tommy Muñiz, argued that Mediafax had been conducting audience research on the Puerto Rican market in a negligent and biased way, reflecting very low numbers for the station's most popular local programs, thus affecting its finances, and its artistic and commercial prestige. See Astroff, *op. cit.*

76 Jane Wagner, " A new face, a new focus, and a new meter," *Caribbean Business*, October 26, 1987, p. 26.

77 See Glorisa J. Canino and Aletha C. Huston, "A Content Analysis of Prime Time Radio and TV News in Puerto Rico," *Journalism Quarterly* 63 (1986): 150–154; Juan Miranda Alfonso, *Los Anuncios Comerciales en la Televisión de Puerto Rico: Su Mensaje Oculto* (Masters Thesis, University of Puerto Rico, 1975).

78 Rubén Arrieta, "A la vanguardia en comunicaciones," *El Nuevo Día*, October 17, 1987, p. 8. Also see Noel Colón Morera, "La lucha por un mercado estratégico," *Logos* (Dec. 1986): 21-26.

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The Origins of the Consumer Culture in Puerto Rico:
The Pre-Television Years (1898-1954)

Luis Alberto Hernández

"Puerto Rico TV Mart Exploding" was the big headline in the March 12, 1986 edition of the entertainment trade weekly *Variety*. With the subheadline "Rich Ad Revenues Draw Investors," Peter Besas, who referred to Puerto Rico as "a highly lucrative backwater," reported that,

> "Though the population of Puerto Rico is a mere 3,000,000, the little island nonetheless brought in a whopping ad revenue of $161,600,000 last year, up 21% from 1984. *This amount is greater than that of the whole U.S. Hispanic market*, which was between $125,000,000 and $150,000,000 despite its Hispano population of anywhere from 15,000,000 to 25,000,000 persons, and twice that, for example, of the whole of the ad revenue generated in Colombia" (1986:1, *emphasis in the original*).

There is no doubt that Puerto Rico was one of the highest rates of consumption in the world. For example, there are more cars per capita on the Island than in the United States (Puerto Rican Socialist Party, 1976:50–51), and in 1979 Puerto Rico was the eighth largest market in volume (after Canada, Japan, West Germany, the United Kingdom, Mexico, the Netherlands, and France), and the first market per capita of U.S. consumer goods. (Bonilla and Campos, 1981:146). These figures are more impressive if we take into account that during the past four decades Puerto Rico's unemployment rate has remained constant between 15 and 22 per cent (Dietz, 1986:275; Junta de Planificación de Puerto Rico, 1986:81).

Puerto Rico is a special but unresearched case in international communications research despite the fact that, more than any other country, the Island substantiates Alan Wells' contention that, "media development can take place in poor countries, and indeed has done so extensively before they reach the economic level or stage associated with such media growth in the histories of the affluent countries" (1972:81). This media growth in Puerto Rico has occurred under conditions of political and economic dependence.

During the last five decades Puerto Rico has experienced a huge increase in capital investment, an increase in the general level of salaries, and an extraordinary increase in public and private consumption. The shift from dependent agriculture to dependent industrialization that started in the late 40s and 50s

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■ Lajas, Puerto Rico, 1946. Jack Delano

transformed the occupational structure of the Island. As Campos and Bonilla say, referring to this transformation of the social organization of production,

> "With the consolidation of the industrial proletariat in the decade of the fifties and with the expansion of the colonial bureaucracy, the utilization of the work force was altered once again changing the social composition of the Puerto Rican working class. The conversion of the colony into a consumer market for U.S. goods and the opening of new spheres of labor in the sphere of the circulation of commodities contributed to this phenomenon" (1976:81).

The compression of this socio-economic and cultural transformation in a relatively short period of time was paralleled by the media explosion of the late 1940s and 50s. From 1946 to 1949, for example, 15 new radio stations were established: before that period there were only seven radio stations on the Island (1950 *Radio Annual-TV Yearbook*:711–18). By 1957, Puerto Rico—then with less than 2% of the population of Latin America—already accounted for 10 to 12% of all television sets in the region (Dunbaugh, 1960:252–53).

It is my contention that we cannot fully understand these rapid socio-economic and cultural changes if we do not analyze the role played by the media as distributional and ideological channels, especially for U.S. based transnational corporations, which by the early 50s had become the major advertisers on the four most powerful radio stations in the Island (1951 *Radio Annual-TV Yearbook*:718, 1952 *Radio Annual-TV Yearbook*:708). The analysis of Puerto Rico's impressive media explosion will give us a clearer picture of the genesis of a consumer culture within a context of dependency, and can help us to explain trends and patterns (e.g. media penetration, transnationalization of advertising) that reached their apex in the 60s, especially in Latin America. For example, it should be pointed out that during the 50s, marketing strategists used Puerto Rico as an important testing ground for American corporations, especially those that depend heavily on advertising (e.g. cosmetics, canned food). Avon Products, for example, tried out its door-to-door selling technique in Puerto Rico in the midfifties before exporting it to other Latin American countries. They conducted market surveys in Puerto Rico and then organized a heavy advertising campaign through magazines, television, and motion picture theaters. Dunbaugh says that results were so close to the U.S. pattern that Avon has now moved on to Cuba, Venezuela, and Mexico, where it has established subsidiaries (1960:215).

We cannot understand the explosion announced and celebrated by the publishers of *Variety* if we do not study the origins of Puerto Rico's consumer culture. The focus of this article will be on the development of radio and advertising in the pre-television era (1898–1954), especially during the late 1940s. This period is very important because it prepared the ground for the arrival of television. The latter inherited a commercial system and a market already familiar with brand names and advertising; it concentrated and strengthened these commercial functions.

Rather than analyzing them as exclusively causal agents, the media should be seen first as developing within a given, determining political-economic reality. In this article I will argue that the increasing capitalization of the Island economy and the quest for economies of scale demanded more rational distributional systems; and that these structural demands of the economy were served by the media. These functions were particularly important in the shift from agriculture to manufacturing.

■ *"Getting to Know You:" Advertising and Brand Names Follow the Invaders*

In 1955, a Federal report titled *Staff Report on Minimum Wages in Puerto Rico* summarized the Island's economic development up to that point in the following terms:

"The outstanding feature of the economic development of Puerto Rico since 1910 has been the declining trend of employment in agriculture. From over 60 per cent of total employment in 1910, agricultural employment declined to less than 40 per cent in 1950. The three areas of the economy which have absorbed the relative decline in agriculture are: (1) government, rising from 1.0 in 1910 to 7.3 in 1950; (2) trade, which increased its relative share from 6.5 per cent to over 12 per cent; and (3) manufacturing and construction which increased their share from 13.5 per cent in 1910 to over 16 per cent in 1950" (U.S. Senate, 1955:7).

However, this report does not discuss a process that started immediately after the invasion of 1898: the absorption of the local economy by American corporations and the full integration of the Island as a dependent market for U.S. goods. It did not take long for the Island to repeat in full scale the old colonial syndrome: a society that exports what it produces and imports what it consumes (Lewis,1968; Quintero Rivera, 1974).

This penetration of the Puerto Rican economy by U.S. corporate interests brought about enormous transformations in the social organization of distribution and consumption. Immediately after the invasion, American manufacturers and marketers sent representatives to assess the new market. Following in the trail of sugar barons and absentee owners, American marketing know-how was introduced in order to modernize the system.

The Federal government and the military government on the Island facilitated this penetration by enacting new laws that favored modern advertising and marketing. For example, in early 1899, just six months after the invasion, several American brewing companies were already exporting beer to the Island without paying duties for the accompanying "advertising matter" (e.g. calendars, glasses, corkscrews). But in June of that year, the Customs Office in San Juan seized some boxes containing glasses from The Christian Moerlein Brewing Co. of Cincinnati (claiming that it was unfair competition for small local merchants) and demanded the payment of duties. After a lot of maneuvering and pressure (including letters back and forth between Washington, Cincinnati, and San Juan), the company got what it wanted: on December 1, 1898 Tariff Circular No. 110 announced that the "Free List" of the Amended Customs Tariff and Regulations for Ports in Porto Rico was amended by order of the War Department. The following was added to the list: "379. Lithographs, posters, calendars, and folders, for advertising purpose only, having no commercial value and designed for free public distribution" (File 483–4). Other advertising-related acts were approved in 1900, 1910, and 1911 paying particular attention to outdoors advertising (e.g., bill posting, sign and bulletin painting) (General Orders #21, Files 1419,1419–1, Act 55).

In 1901 the Island was put under the U.S. tariff system and the so-called common market was established; Puerto Rico became an "American" market in the Caribbean. This measure eliminated the only legal obstacle to the Island's full integration into the U.S. market. By 1901 U.S. goods already accounted for 78 per cent of the Island's imports. This share rose to 90 per cent by 1914. At the same time, the share of imports from Spain, the old metropolis, had fallen to 2 per cent. Trade with Spain has been basically in foodstuffs and these were sold in bulk in Puerto Rico without brand names or labels. All this changed with the introduction of American canned and packaged foods. Del Monte, the California-based corporation, for example, made its debut in the Island in 1907 as part of the Plaza Provision experiment. This was one of the few instances in which entrepreneurs from the United States (New York based) invested in Puerto Rican distributing firms. Del Monte introduced new brands and what we can call the first "live commercials:"

> "Confident of their product, Del Monte of California advised Plaza salesmen to go to the small retail *colmados* and open cans of Del Monte and rival products for comparisons and also for a treat for the proprietors. Salesmen split cases and left goods on a trial basis. These sales methods, learned from consultation with men on the mainland, were in this case financed by North American capital in the distributing House" (Cochran,1959:139).

Thus, a new phenomenon became part of the retailing scene: brand loyalty. As Thomas Cochran argues in his book *The Puerto Rican Businessman: A Study in Cultural Change*, "Adjustment of the Puerto Rican food merchants to exclusive distributorship of United States branded goods pushed by advertising and salesmanship was a major change of this period up to 1929" (1959:23). In a country with such a heavy dependence on foreign trade, these represented profound cultural changes.

While control over the importation and distribution of foodstuffs remained in the hands of San Juan wholesalers, "...the non-food importers faced increasing competition from manufacturers' agents as well as from direct branches of U.S. concerns" (1959:23–24). According to Cochran, by 1922, of the 107 foreign corporations doing business in Puerto Rico (chiefly through agents), 103 were from the United States. This trade was basically in food essentials, wearing and apparel, heavy machinery, and luxuries for the local elites.

During the first three decades the range of advertising was very limited (*World Broadcast Advertising*, 1971:19). Traditional advertising had been done basically through newspapers. During this period we see the decline of the traditional partisan press and the growth of a fully commercial press (Pedreira, 1969). Aggressive advertising (the work of salesmen) reached only retailers, a very important group in local communities. The retailers were the channels for the establishment of brand loyalty and new tastes. Thus, relatively immune to newspaper advertising, the illiterate majority was reached through point-of-purchase displays (Cochran, 1959:95).

The established pattern of exclusive distributorships meant the control of the market by specific brands and the forced creation of new preferences and tastes. The California Rice Growers Association, for example, already had full control of the market by the mid-twenties (House of Representatives, 1943:894–95). They controlled—and still do—the basic staple in the Puerto Rican diet. But they only sold the short-grain variety and this became the "best" rice in the minds of most Puerto Ricans.

Summarizing this period David Carsons says, in his book *International Marketing: A Comparative Systems Approach*,

> "The salesmen were not trying to explain manufacturing processes or industrial know-how but they were selling merchandise; and the information they were passing along centered on U.S. market conditions, sales methods, credit terms and similar matters" (1967:69).

And as Victor S. Clark commented in his report, *Porto Rico and Its Problems*:

> "The transformation which Porto Rican commercial organization has undergone is similar in character to that which has occurred elsewhere but is more far-reaching. The more complete and drastic character of the change is doubtless due to the coming to a focus a whole group of revolutionary forces in a relatively short period of time (1930:423).

Radio was introduced during the last decade of this period; but it would have to wait two decades to achieve its full potential.

■ *Radio, the Great Depression, and the New Deal*

In 1922 the Porto Rico Telephone Company (a subsidiary of the then incipient International Telephone and

Telegraph) (ITT), received a license from the Federal Radio Commission to establish a 500-watt radio station: WKAQ, incorporated as Radio Corporation of Porto Rico (Federal Radio Commission Report, 1929). The station went on the air on December 3, 1922, just three months after PWK of Havana (also owned by ITT) hit the spectrum, making these the first radio stations to be established in Latin America (Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1951:30–31).

ITT was initially more interested in securing its control over the future development of radiotelephony than in the commercial potential of the new medium. Hence, during its first nine years of operation, WKAQ functioned as an "experimental" radio station with some educational programming. Using local announcers, the station began to transmit one hour a week and later increased to three nights a week. Due to its "experimental" and non-commercial nature, the station did not generate revenues. Thus, commercial advertising was introduced in 1930 (1951:30).

At this point the Puerto Rican market was not yet ready for the full exploitation of the commercial possibilities of radio. By 1930, less than 30 per cent of the population was urban and there were only an approximately 5,000 radio sets in the Island (mostly in the San Juan area) with an estimated audience of 25,000 (Arno Press & *The New York Times*, 1971:29). U.S. corporations did not bother with direct advertising campaigns. A report on the commercial possibilities of radio in Latin America prepared by the U.S. Department of Commerce in 1931, described the situation in Puerto Rico as follows:

> "The local station [WKAQ] has done broadcast advertising but heretofore only for local business houses. It has not broadcast any material received from the States, although American products have been advertised by local stores almost exclusively. The local station has no exclusive contract with any agent to sell time" (1971:29).

The following advice was given to potential U.S. advertisers:

> "United States stations are usually not received in Porto Rico before dark... so that any broadcasting over the local station in the afternoon would have a sure audience of local set owners and would probably be more effective than an evening broadcast, particularly in reaching women" (1971:29).

Besides the Department of Commerce's assessments of commercial and advertising conditions in Puerto Rico and the rest of Latin America (e.g. the Trade Promotion Series), plans were being made to facilitate the development of commercial radio on the Island. In 1931, a bill to amend Section 2 of the Federal Radio Commission Act was introduced in the House of Representatives. This bill would remove Puerto Rico from the first broadcasting zone, which included the New England states, in order to facilitate local broadcast installations on the Island (U.S. National Archives: File 20971/60).

By 1935, the Puerto Rican newspapers with the largest circulations and the two local radio stations (WKAQ, WNEL) had hired media representatives in New York City (Allied Publishing Co.,1935). However, advertisers had to wait until the mid-40s for the full development of a modern commercial broadcasting system.

In the early 30s the Great Depression hit the Island, aggravating the problems inherent in dependent capitalist development. The Federal Government commissioned several studies to assess the socio-economic conditions in Puerto Rico. The most important was *Porto Rico and Its Problems*, written by Victor S. Clark for the Brookings Institute. The recommendations of this study were crucial for the application of New Deal policies in the Island. In the midst of its many bleak findings, the study optimistically concluded that:

> "Business houses are, on the whole, completely managed and up to date. North American merchandise and techniques and advertising methods have displaced to a considerable extent the less aggressive trade practices and tactics of the leisurely colonial era" (1930:428).

According to the report, foreign corporations spent $400,000 on local advertising during the fiscal year 1927–1929 (1930:414). Compared to the zero-advertising and marketing situation before 1898, the Island had undergone a profound transformation. The report also pointed to a problem that would plague the system for the next 25 years: the disorganization and inefficiency at the retailing end of the circulation process. Thus the report pointed out that:

> "...small wayside stores with meagre stocks of staples, provisions, canned goods, soft drinks, patent medicines, and cheap textiles still survives, indeed appear to be multiplying. Their survival in the face of the modernization of urban trade is due largely to the poverty of the people and the habit of hand-to-mouth buying, especially of food and other perishables found elsewhere in the tropics" (1930:425).

These cracks in the production circle needed to be corrected and some preventive social measures had to be adopted in order to alleviate some of the disastrous effects of the Great Depression; something had to be done to save such an important market for U.S. products. One of the immediate results of the New Deal measures was the huge increase in the transfer of Federal funds to the Island; significant amounts were assigned for public works, agricultural subsidies, etc. From 1933 to 1946, for example, the total figure for direct aid and loans was $230 million. According to Morris Morley, these funds played a vital role in opening up the country to American exports, manufactures, and investments (Morley, 1974:219).

The growing significance of the Puerto Rican market for U.S. exports was officially recognized in the Congressional Hearings of 1944 which dealt primarily with the problems of distribution in Puerto Rico during World War II. Based on 1939 figures, the hearings summarized the commercial importance of the Island in the following terms:

> "We hear a lot about the good-neighbor policy and how important it is to develop trade with South America, and we should do everything conceivably possible to develop that trade. Let's compare Puerto Rico as a market with the South American countries. It outranks everyone of them, and it did consistently... Puerto Rico is above Mexico, it is above Cuba, which has a sugar quota almost double Puerto Rico's sugar quota...and above all the republics down there. It buys more food from the farms of continental United States in normal peacetime years than is sold to all Latin America combined"(1944:1134).

By 1939 Puerto Rico was spending 47% of its income on imported goods (Perloff, 1950:122). In addition to being the largest U.S. market in Latin America, the Island was already the seventh largest market in volume of U.S. goods after the UK, Canada, Japan, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden (U.S. House of Representatives, 1944:1133). This expansion in the market, which was accompanied by a precipitous decline in local food production (Morley, 1974:2200), meant an increasing dependence on U.S. imports—the most expensive market in the world. For example, besides the basic staples of the Puerto Rican diet (rice, codfish, beans, and lard), there was an increase in the importation of canned goods and other labeled products. By 1940 Puerto Ricans were familiar with brand names like Libby, Del Monte, Quaker Oats, Mazola, and Camay (1944:1581). The penetration of the corporations represented by these and other American brand names can be assessed, according

to the same report, by the fact that many of these corporations were members of the Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce. The list included, among others, the Rice Growers Association of California, Seven Up, Shell, IBM, and Nestle's (1944:1628–30).

This influx of money and heavy importation brought about an expansion in the market which was reflected in the establishment of four new radio stations during the 1930s: WNEL (San Juan, 1934), WPRP (Ponce, 1936), WPRA (Mayaguez, 1937), and WPAB (Ponce, 1939). The local need for commercial advertising in Puerto Rico's second and third largest cities was one of the most important reasons given by these applicants when they requested a license from the FCC.[1] The growth in the number of radio stations was accompanied by a tremendous increase in the number of radio sets in operation: from 5,000 listed in the 1931 Report the number jumped to 70,000 by 1943 (Stanley,1945:31). Thus, slowly but surely, radio advertising emanating from different corners of Puerto Rico, was becoming a national phenomenon.

With the 1940s we enter a crucial third phase in the development of commercial radio in Puerto Rico.

■ *The War, Populism, and the Cry for Industrialization*

The 1940s marked a turning point in Puerto Rico's contemporary history: the transition from agriculture to industrialization. At the beginning of the decade Puerto Rico "was clearly in the general category of primary product countries, exporting for a world market and subject to international price fluctuation and political arrangements beyond their power to influence" (Lewis, 1968:115). And this sector was stagnating and not showing any signs of recovery.

In response to this situation, the insular populist government that came to power in 1940 with the support of the rural masses, embarked on an industrialization program which was seen as the panacea that would solve Puerto Rico's chronic problems of poverty and unemployment. The attack came in two phases. First, the Island government created local public utilities and corporations (e.g., Planning Board, Development Bank) and promoted industrialization with funds from its own treasury (Ross, 1966:61–75). But when this populist strategy failed, for among other reasons, the lack of capital (only 10 manufacturing plants were established from 1942 to 1947), the local government changed its plans. Thus, in 1947, with the approval of Act 436 by the local legislature, Operation Bootstrap was born (1966:129), promoting the Island as a pool of cheap labor and the only place where American investors could operate "free of taxation without leaving the United States." In an assessment of the results of the "Industrial Incentives Act," David Ross comments, "...it is generally agreed by competent observers that most of the new industrial operations which have been established in Puerto Rico since 1947 have been established for the purpose of obtaining income tax exemption" (1966:1 00).

The growing industrialization of the Island, with its accompanying changes in the occupational structure and urbanization, propelled the radio explosion of the late 40s. But before we examine these changes, we must turn our attention to World War II's impact on the Puerto Rican economy.

World War II was a "blessing" for the Island economy, dramatizing once again the Island's dependence on U.S. trade and Federal largesse. While imports showed a momentary decline during the early years of the War due to shipping limitations (U.S. House of Representatives:1944:Part 19), Federal government expenditures in the Island increase considerably, especially on war expenditures. War expenditures had a tremendous impact on jobs and on the general income level. According to the Chamber of Commerce of Puerto Rico in its *Economic Review* of July, 1944, employment figures at the end of June, 1944 did not

> "indicate one feature of the present economy of Puerto Rico that very greatly affects the availability of

labor for employment. That factor is the size of the monthly sum that is paid out in Puerto Rico by the U.S. Armed Forces in the form of dependency allotments and direct transmittals of salary from the citizens of the island who are now in the U.S. Army, Navy, and Merchant Marine...There are actual certified cases where five entire families are now being maintained on the dependency allotments salary transmittals forwarded by a single first class private, and the monthly payments received by relatives and dependents of non-commissioned officers are proportionately higher" (1944:5).

And the Report later observed that, "With Puerto Rico's major crop—sugar—in the doldrums, unemployment would be a far more serious problem than it is were it not for these payments." Some government reports also agreed on the enormous importance of these expenditures. For example, a report prepared by the Caribbean

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Commission in 1948 concluded that, "Income directly traceable to the war activities of the Federal Government increased from $8.1 millions in 1940 to $106.4 millions in 1944" (Hibben and Pico, 1948:50).

Although agriculture continued to be the major source of jobs during this period, its share of the net income began to decline. This relative decline of agriculture was accompanied by gradual changes in the social structure, and consequently in consumption habits. The growing participation of the government in the economy, as a provider of jobs and financer of public corporations, the increasing importance of trade, and the growing number of functionaries for foreign capital created new middle sectors in the population with higher salaries. These processes were accompanied by an increase in urbanization (Rottenberg, 1958:251). All these changes expanded the consumer base, especially in the urban areas, and increased the range of advertising (1958:251). However, according to the Congressional hearings of 1944, there were still serious problems at the circulation end of the production process; there was a lag between the increase in income and the marketing infrastructure. The hearings noted that:

> "With an economy principally concerned with the distribution of products rather than with their elaboration, Puerto Rico has certain peculiar characteristics. The most striking is that there exists in Puerto Rico nothing which can rigidly be called a marketing organization" (U.S. House of Representatives, 1944:1709).

It was also pointed out that the Puerto Rican economy had a congestion of middle men and that there was a lack of strong specialization among wholesalers (1944:1709). But this Congressional assessment hit the crux of the matter when it noted that:

> "A second characteristic of the Puerto Rican market is the deepness of the rub of consumption habits. Undoubtedly a large part of the reliance upon a diet of rice, beans, lard, codfish and a few other products is dictated by the poverty of the people and the inexpensiveness of the diet. But, on the other hand one does not find in Puerto Rico the systematic attempt made by business firms in the States to develop a market for new and improved types of products. Bargain sales are seldom made; advertising is extremely limited" (1944:1709).

■ Toa Alta, Puerto Rico, 1945. Louise Rosskam.

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Thus, calling for more varied consumption, the report implies that there were companies which wanted to enter the market with "new [durables] and improved types of products." According to the hearings the lack of a modern marketing structure was an obstacle to the full industrialization of the Island.

The rapid and chaotic development of commercial radio in the post-war period could be interpreted as a structural response to the problems described in the Congressional hearings of 1944. The commercial model of radio broadcasting, with its total dependence on advertising, offered an advantage to powerful U.S. corporations that wanted to enter the market or were already in full control of it.

It is not a mere coincidence that in August 1945, the Inter-American Affairs Office of the Emergency Management Office (one of the divisions of the Executive Office of the President) issued a report titled *Data and Rates of Radio Stations in the Other American Republics and Puerto Rico* after having conducted a survey of radio stations in Latin America. In the spirit of the Trade Promotion Series and symptomatic of the plans for overseas expansion in the post-war period, this Office had requested information on peak listening hours, national radio networks and advertising rates.

Although only one Puerto Rican radio station answered the questionnaire, the report was important because 1) no Federal agency (not even the FCC) had issued a report on broadcasting in Puerto Rico since the Report of 1931, prepared by the Department of Commerce, and 2) Puerto Rico was again included in a report about Latin America (U.S. Office of Inter-American Affairs, 1945:144).

But compared with Latin America, Puerto Rico had an important advantage: direct access (no tariffs, same currency, etc.) to the U.S. market. Therefore, an intensive promotional campaign to sell the Island to the highest bidders in the United States started immediately after the War. Wanting to attract American investors and advertisers, both the insular government and the most powerful radio stations began to praise the "unique" characteristics of the Puerto Rican market. In 1946, for example, the Puerto Rican Development Company, a government agency, hired the advertising agency McCann Erickson to organize a promotional campaign in the major business periodicals of the United States: *Business Week*, *Fortune*, and *Nation's Business*. The campaign emphasized "the industrial opportunities in Puerto Rico" for American investors (Ross, 1966:88–95). These efforts were later sanctified with the approval of the Industrial Incentives Act (Act 436) by the insular legislature.

This government campaign was paralleled by the first publicity blitz of the major Puerto Rican stations in the trade journal *Radio Annual Yearbook*. WNEL (San Juan), the most powerful radio station at the time, started a new trend when it placed a full-page ad in the 1945 *Yearbook*, claiming that it was the station with the largest listenership in the Island and emphasizing Puerto Rico's dependence on U.S. imports (1945 *Radio Annual Yearbook*: 648). The other stations followed suit and in 1947, for example, an ad for WAPA proudly proclaimed: "Puerto Rico is the $200,000,000 market in the Caribbean where the Americas meet...Puerto Rico has more radios per 1,000 people than any other country in the Caribbean" (*Radio Annual Yearbook*: 676). In 1948, WIAC announced "2,000,000 American citizens in Puerto Rico...Their yearly purchases amount to the impressive figures of $225,000,000. Here indeed is a market that should not be overlooked" (*Radio Annual Yearbook*:700). This pattern would be repeated by all radio stations until 1954.[2]

Four radio stations monopolized the Puerto Rican market and the ads in the trade journal during the late 1940s: WNEL, WIAC, WKAQ, and WAPA. These stations had sales representatives in New York City and except for WIAC, were affiliated to U.S. networks. WNEL was affiliated to NBC, WKAQ to CBS, and WAPA to ABC (1946 *Radio Annual Yearbook*).

The ads in the *Radio Annual Yearbook* during this period did not specify who the advertisers were nor the types of products advertised. However, we can speculate based on the 1944 Congressional Hearings and an ad for WKAQ that appeared in the 1951 *Yearbook*, that most of the advertising was basically for beverages, beer, soup, cigarettes, cars, airlines, cereals, and drugs (U.S.House of Representatives, 1944:1581–82; 1951 *Radio Annual Yearbook*). The euphoria of the *Yearbook* ads and the proliferation of so many radio stations from 1946 to 1949, show the increasing importance of commercial advertising by the end of the decade; the market was much readier for the commercial potential of radio. For example, according to Samuel Badillo, director of a local advertising agency, by the end of the decade some advertisers were spending more than $200,000 annually on advertising with more than 80% of the total going to radio (Universidad de Puerto Rico; 1950:260).

Another indicator of the expansion in the market and its reflection in advertising expenditures was the "advertising index" for newspapers gathered by the Bureau of the Budget (Office of the Governor) as part of their *Puerto Rico Monthly Statistical Report*. Using 1939 as the base year (100), the Report shows that there was a continuous increase in advertising expenditures during the decade, especially after the War: 1940=147.2, 1941= na, 1942= na, 1943= 98.8, 1944= 135.6, 1945= 162.8, 1946= 193.1, 1947= 157.0, 1948= 224.2, and 1949= 230.0 (Office of the Governor,1950). By the end of the decade there were 22 radio stations in the Island and the number of radio sets in operation had increased tremendously. According to the study *Patterns of Living in Puerto Rican Families*, in 1946 23.4% of all Puerto Rican families had a radio set (85,400 sets): 11.8% of all rural families and 39.3% of all urban families. This study also pointed out that at "least 36.6% of all families had someone who listened to the radio regularly" (Roberts and Stefani, 1949:Section VII).

These figures show the increasing range and impact of commercial radio. Although still basically an urban phenomenon, by the end of the decade commercial radio had substituted the press as the most important mass medium in Puerto Rico. From 5,000 sets and one station in 1931, the numbers had jumped to 130,000 sets and 22 radio stations by 1949. (1950 *Radio Annual-TV Yearbook*: 714)

However, as I said earlier, this rapid growth and expansion, guided by the logic of commercialism, was chaotic.[3] For example, according to statistics compiled from the FCC Reports, the stations were barely making it financially. A peak in broadcast income was reached in 1946, when there were only seven stations on the Island. But within a year the number of stations doubled and the annual broadcast income decreased. In 1948, the stations registered a negative income: the market had reached its saturation point.

In a country with a commercial broadcasting system and no power to formulate its communications policies, the "market" functions as the only regulating mechanism. Thus, in contrast to the immediate post-war period of unprecedented media explosion, there followed a period of relative stability in the number of radio stations. Between 1949 and 1954 (the year of the arrival of television) only five new radio stations were established (*1955 Radio Annual-TV Yearbook*:659–62). During this five-year period the industrialization of the Island entered a new phase: more factories were established during this period than during the late 40s. But there were still serious problems with distribution; there were obstacles to the full industrialization of the Island. The time was ready for a more systematic attack.

■ *How to Create Modern Consumers*

By the end of the 40s and the early years of the 50s some reports prepared by the Puerto Rican government and several studies commissioned by the Social Sciences Research Center at the University of Puerto Rico tried to assess the problems at the circulation end of the production process. But this time, in

addition to the traditional examination of retailing practices, there was a heavy emphasis on savings and consumer shopping habits. (Advertising was already an accepted institution.)

These researchers were foreseeing a new phase of "modernization" (i.e., concentration of American capital in the Island), and, therefore, wanted to know how consumers' old habits could be adapted to the new situation. It is as if these researchers were preparing the path for the assault of U.S. capital in the mid-50s, when general department stores like Sears and Bella Hess, and supermarkets like Grand Union, began to penetrate and control the market. The big question was: how to create modern consumers?

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Plans were being made not only in Puerto Rico but also in the United States. In 1950, the National Planning Association of the United States commissioned S. Chase to prepare a report on the "benefits provided to the United States by Puerto Rico." With conciseness as well as racist and liberal touches, Chase summarized his findings in seven points that described Puerto Rico as:

> "1. A market of some $350 million annually for American goods. 2. An outlet for U.S. capital. If you make a killing you keep it— or most of it. 3. A winter playground. 4. A contingent of fighting men who can climb mountains in Korea, or anywhere else. 5. A labor pool for shortages which are developing in the cold war's defense program. 6. A laboratory for racial agreement and reform. 7. A cultural contrast within our country which can off-set many criticisms by Latins and others." (quoted in Villamil, 1979:256)

One study that had an immediate impact on policy formation was *Marketing Efficiency in Puerto Rico*, by John K. Galbraith and Richard Holton. Addressing the problem of overmanning in the Puerto Rican retailing system (1949–1950) and its consequences on the cost of consumer goods, Galbraith and Holton argued that the ease of entry into the retailing business functioned as an "unemployment relief." Galbraith and Holton described how the existence of many ill-stocked, small scale retail outlets impeded the accumulation of capital. They complained that "Profits that could be made are foregone in order to allow others to make a living" (1955:3), and noted that: "Entry of mainland chains has been blocked…by a number of problems, the most important of which apparently is the uncertainty of a sales volume sufficient to support a chain organization" (1955:186). Thus, the small retail outlets were obstacles that had to be eliminated and the market needed to undergo a rapid transformation so that the advantages of the economies of scale could be reaped.

In this process some cultural practices among Puerto Rican consumers needed to be transformed or eliminated. For example, Galbraith and Holton found that Puerto Rican consumers identified stores with the personalities of their owners. These personal ties determined to a great extent consumers' loyalty to particular stores. They also pointed out the practice of credit purchasing (*coger fiao*), especially in foods, as another important tie between consumer and retailer (1955:192). Galbraith and Holton suggested that all these practices had to be eliminated. They argued that "A change in these attitudes or the introduction of new marketing institutions with a different set of attitudes are essential if Puerto Rico is to have a lower cost marketing system" (1955:3).

And they were heard: "Most of their recommendations were implemented over the next few years by the Puerto Rican government and private individuals" (Wish and Kelly, 1969:21). Another study, *Savings Among Upper-Income Families in Puerto Rico*, by Eleonor E. Maccoby and Frances Fielder, dealt with consumer shopping habits and aspirations among high-income groups ($2,000 or more) because: "Since possible changes in the patterns of retail outlets are sometimes considered in the effort to effect more economies in the distribution of goods in Puerto Rico,

consumer shopping habits are of considerable interest"(1953:59). They also argued that "The flexibility of such shopping practices is related to the possible acceptance of (or resistance to) new retail outlets" (1953:59).

This concern with the shopping habits among high-income groups (e.g. professional and managerial sectors) was very important because these groups made up the clientele of the few existing supermarkets, and they were still using credit and convenience as the criteria for shopping. Prices were not the controlling factor in determining the choice of stores (1953:61).

Maccoby and Fielder found that "Puerto Ricans carry a considerable larger volume of current debt than people of similar income in the United States" (1953:69). This problem with savings was worsened by the increasing indebtedness due to the buying of durables through installment credit. However, this concern with savings was being undermined by the increasing promotion of consumerism (especially by the radio stations), and the lack of local control over the repatriation of corporate profits and credit terms (Morley, 1974:236). On the other hand, local savings were being invested primarily in real estate and trade, two non-productive areas (1953:69–72).

This heavily studied period demonstrates how old and new habits and values can co-exist. However, this is always a tense relationship because the economy favors the latter. Old habits and values are either adapted or eliminated. Therefore, these studies were important because they assessed and described the conditions of the market, and this information was crucial for future investors.

Radio, the government (through required home economics courses and consumer education), and television after 1954 responded to the structural demands of an economy controlled more and more by U.S. corporations, and paved the way for this retraining period. In their efforts to create a nation of consumers, they would transform old cultural practices.

During this period the major radio stations continued to thrive and plans were being made by the owners of the two most powerful radio stations to bring television to the Island. Applications were submitted in 1952, and it was business as usual. The period was epitomized by a radio station ad that proudly proclaimed: "No sir…we do not sell time. We do sell audience...the biggest audience in Puerto Rico" (*1950 Radio Annual-TV Yearbook*:716).

The decade started with a more solid advertising base. There were more full-page ads in the *Yearbook* than ever before and for the first time the radio stations announced the types of products advertised. For example, WAPA Radio declared:

> "One of the most important of all U.S. world markets, Puerto Rico buys drugs and foods, shoes and soap and other U.S. products totalling more than $300 million annually. And Puerto Rico has more radios per 1,000 people than any country in the Caribbean, responsive radios anxious for more products" (1950:716).

and WIAC Radio announced its booklet "Puerto Rico-Rich Port," saying,

> "Puerto Rico's more than two million American citizens are buying goods and services at a record rate. Puerto Rico is a market as large and important as the largest American market (San Francisco). Puerto Rico is an American market. Net U.S. imports reach $450,000,000…93% American brand names products" (1950:714).

However, the real significance of these radio ads lie in the fact that they indicate the total dependence of Puerto Rican stations on transnational corporate advertisers. For example, 36 out of 40 advertisers listed in a 1951 ad for WKAQ were transnational corporations. We find among them such big spenders as Procter and Gamble, General Foods, and Lever Brothers (1951:718). This pattern

was repeated by the other two most powerful radio stations: WAPA (33 transnational and four local advertiser) and WIAC (17 transnational and one local advertisers). The latter ends its list of advertisers with the caption: "Ray-O-Vac...and many others!" (1952:708, 711)

Television arrived in 1954 at a highly symbolic moment. In that year, not only did manufacturing surpass agriculture as the main component of the GNP (UNESCO, 1958:195), but also the urban population, for the first time, was larger than the rural population (*Editor and Publisher*, 1958:502). Radio, by setting up a commercial foundation, laid the groundwork for the new medium.

The marketing demands of this new era could not be satisfied by radio alone; television came to fill the gap. Thus, television came to symbolize the birth of a new urban and industrial Puerto Rico. In 1957, for example, just three years after its introduction, television advertising accounted for 50 per cent of all advertising expenditures on the Island—a share much higher than in any other Latin American country at the time (Dunbaugh, 1960:87,96). Thus, from its inception, television became the advertising medium par excellence in Puerto Rico.

■ *Conclusion*

As I stated earlier, Puerto Rico is a very important yet poorly studied case, largely ignored by mainstream and critical communications researchers alike. Due to the commercial nature of the mass media in Puerto Rico and the colonial status of the Island, Puerto Ricans have not been able to determine their own communications policies. Media development, since the establishment of radio in 1922, has been dictated by the logic of commercialism and the imperatives of U.S. capital. These apparatuses have grown, in great part, as a response to the distributional needs of capitalism in the Island (e.g., the explosion of radio in the postwar era). The above analysis shows that there are neither independent or non-ideological technologies. There are many areas that need to be studied in more detail: the use of Puerto Rico as a marketing testing ground by U.S. corporations, the content of advertising, especially during the first three decades of this century, and the specific nature of the structure of consumption. ❐

ENDNOTES

1 The Federal Radio Commission Office in San Juan was officially opened on December 23, 1937 (U.S. House of Representatives, 1944:1848).

2 The owners of WKAQ and WAPA radio stations opened the first two TV channels in Puerto Rico, channel 2 and channel 4 respectively. They were the only Puerto Rican media outlets that placed ads in the *Radio Annual-TV Yearbook* after 1954.

3 This concept is borrowed from McAnany's study of Brazil's culture industry (McAnany, 1984).

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The Aesthetic Discourse: *Reading Chicano Cinema Since* La Bamba

Chon Noriega

> *"But even the smallest smoke signal can mark the way on the road out of the cinema barrio and toward Mama's dream of el Norte."*
>
> Richard Corliss, *Time*, July 11, 1988.

Between Summer 1987 and Spring 1988, Hollywood released four films that depicted the Chicano experience: *La Bamba* (1987), *Born in East L.A.* (1987), *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988), and *Stand and Deliver* (1988). These films were seen as part of a new phenomenon, a hybrid called "Hispanic Hollywood." The Hispanic directors, producers and writers who made these films had escaped the "cinema barrio" of their alternative production companies and entered the mainstream, bringing positive, yet popular images with them.[1] Or so *Time* and other mainstream periodicals claimed.

What did these films represent: the Chicano experience or a Hollywood success story with, incidentally, Chicano characters? Until now, Chicano film criticism has turned to the formal properties of the text—its narrative content and images—to provide an answer. But when we consider to whom the film signifies, several answers or "readings" are revealed. In an attempt to move Chicano film criticism toward reception as integral to the production of meanings, I will examine the aesthetic discourse of film reviews, interviews and feature articles in the mainstream, alternative and Hispanic press.[2] It is here that film first reveals itself as a multiple text, since each publication offers a different interpretation, one that either reflects, anticipates or attempts to influence the expectations of its readership.

Such an approach, however, confronts two impediments: image-oriented Chicano film criticism; and a broader discourse on cinema that places Chicano and other ethnic films within the context of a "social problem" rather than of cultural identity or even film history. Therefore, before I undertake an analysis of the "horizon of expectations" (Jauss) for the four films, it will be necessary to consider the historical background as well as the prevailing approaches to Chicano film criticism.[3]

■ *Historical Background*

Chicano stereotypes were established during film's silent period, and have continued to reappear throughout the history of American cinema: The Chicano has gone from *bandido* to gangster to gang member; while the Chicana remains either the passive object or the "dark lady."[4] These "images," based on ethnocentric assumptions, have made the Mexican

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American in popular fiction and film the most "localized" ethnic stereotype, identified with the Southwest despite more national demographics, and limited to the actions genres: the western and urban violence films (Pettit: XV).

The first films to depict the Chicano came from the "greaser" genre, and included such films as *Tony the Greaser* (1911), *The Greaser's Revenge* (1914) and *Guns and Greasers* (1918), the last film to use "greaser" in its title (Keller, 27). The "greaser"—a product of Anglo-American thought since the early 1800s—was a violent and murderous character who roamed the Southwest and whose inevitable defeat or redemption reaffirmed North American strength and virtue, legitimating the dispossession of Mexicans and, later, Chicanos in the Southwest territories. While the Mexican revolution has been cited as a factor in the "greaser" genre, the "greaser" is more a product of internal conflict for economic and political control of the Southwest territories. It is important, therefore, to remember that Arizona and New Mexico (exceptional for its Chicano majority) become states in 1912. Thus the redeemed or "good greaser" can be seen as a prescription for Chicanos: Be prepared to protect North Americans from other "greasers" (Mexicans) but do not expect ever to be more than a double outcast or "noble greaser," neither Mexican nor American. With few exceptions, American films identified Chicanos as "greasers," "wetbacks" or "Mexicans" until the 1960s, so that citizenship and the hybrid, syncretic nature of ethnic experience were denied.

Despite Hollywood's dominance since World War I, several forces have either modified or countered persistent Chicano stereotypes. The World Wars closed European markets, causing Hollywood to turn to Latin America in order to maintain its profit margins. In order to secure Latin American allies as well as markets during World War II, Hollywood and the U.S. government became more sensitive to Latin American portrayals, although films still misrepresented cultural and linguistic variations (Woll: 14–16; 53–65). In the post-war decade, social problem films offered more positive Chicano depictions, although the hero was often a "white Good Samaritan" (Roffman and Purdy: 252–256; Keller: 33).

Mexico and other Latin American countries have successfully protested Hollywood stereotypes since the "greaser" period (Delpar; Woll; Rios-Bustamante: 9). The protests from Hispanics in the United States, however, went unheard until the civil rights movements. Nonetheless, Spanish-language newspapers in the United States reveal evidence of organized resistance in the form of editorials and boycotts since at least 1910 (Limón).

In the late-1960s and early-1970s, the Chicano Movement, in conjunction with other civil rights groups, pressured Hollywood studios and commercial television to hire and train more minorities. These new positions were "token gestures" involving low-budget documentaries and public affairs shows, but nonetheless provided the experience and resources for a Chicano cinema to develop (Keller, 47; Guernica, 12). Given these marginal resources and outlets, Chicano filmmakers soon formed independent production companies. And in the late-1970s, several formulated a counter-cinema based on two precepts: "the need to evolve a Chicano cinema aesthetic, and the need to create an alternative to the 'commercial' influences of Hollywood film..." (Treviño, 176; Camplis; Johansen; Cine-Aztlán).

In the twenty-year period before *La Bamba*, Chicanos produced numerous shorts and 10 feature-length dramas: *La Vida* (1973), *Please Don't Bury Me Alive!* (1977), *Amor Chicano Es Para Siempre* (1978), *Only Once in a Lifetime* (1978), *Raíces de Sangre* (Mexico, 1978), *Run, Tecato, Run* (1979), *Zoot Suit* (1981), *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortéz* (1982), *Heartbreaker* (1983) and *El Norte* (1983). These films were not "picked up" by major Hollywood distributors, with the exception of *Zoot Suit* and *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortéz*, which received limited and misguided promotion as a "gang" film and macho western, respectively.[5] Thus, Chicano films have had to seek

outlets though the barrio and art-house theater circuits, film festivals, college campuses and public television.

Concurrent with the Chicano Movement and the emergence of a Chicano cinema, was the reemergence of older Hollywood stereotypes in gang youth films, including *Boulevard Nights* (1979) and *Walk Proud* (1981). These films were an attempt to exploit the Movement and its market potential. Chicano organizations such as M.E.Ch.A., Nosotros and the Chicano Cinema Coalition, however, effectively protested these films as exploitive and racist.[6]

■ *Chicano Film Criticism*

Given the long history of negative stereotypes, it is no surprise that when Chicano film criticism began to emerge in the late-1970s, its focus—like that of earlier ethnic-oriented and feminist film studies—would be on the Chicano "image" in film. Consider the titles of the major works on Chicanos in cinema: *The Latin Image in American Film*, *Images of the Mexican American in Fiction and Film*, *Chicano Images in Film*, and Gary Keller's introductory essay in *Chicano Cinema*, "The Image of the Chicano in Mexican, United States, and Chicano Cinema: An Overview."[7]

By the mid-1980s, however, film critics had begun to question the adequacy of "image" analysis. In "Colonialism, Racism, and Representation: An Introduction," Robert Stam and Louise Spence critique the usual "image" analysis: "The privileging of social portrayal, plot and character...has led to the slighting of the specifically cinematic dimensions of the films; the analyses might easily have been of novels or plays rather than films (634)."

The new methodological model Stam and Spence propose does not dispense with content (or image) analysis, but instead makes it particular to the film medium: "Its emphasis should be on narrative structure, genre conventions, and cinematic style rather than on perfect correctness of representation or fidelity to an original 'real' model or prototype (641)." In other words, the image cannot be extracted from its articulation within a cinematic aesthetic system and mode of production.

■ *Methodology*

The methodological model followed in this paper moves beyond image-oriented, text-bound criticism—with its assumption that a text tells one story—to examine reception within the aesthetic discourse of the popular press. I plan to build upon the work of Carlos Cortés, who adds a much needed contextual element to Chicano film criticism. It should be noted, however, that Chicano cultural and historical studies have long turned to newspapers in order to reconstruct Chicano perceptions of events since the Mexican American War. In fact, in one of the first essays on Chicanos and film, José Limón uses such an approach to examine the Chicano response to "greaser" films in the Southwest. A decade later, Cortés would be among the first in either Chicano or film studies to theorize the role or impact of the aesthetic discourse on film reception.

Cortés argues that the image the viewer sees on the screen depends on the pre-established context of the "societal curriculum" (family, peer groups, neighborhoods) and "total media curriculum" (newspapers, magazines, television) that "educate" the viewer.[8] In particular, he cites film reviews and columns as the "fragmentary evidence" available to the film historian attempting impact analysis, although he fails to recognize these sources as an important discourse in their own right. Nonetheless, Cortés's concept of the "total media curriculum" allows for multiple readings and challenges the primacy of the text, since "film does not operate alone" (Cortés, *Chicanas*: 96).

While Cortés does not theorize the receptions possible within such a framework, Stam and Spence suggest the three levels of reception that Stuart Hall delineates in "Culture, the media and 'the ideological effect'" (344–346). Hall argues that the formal properties of a text construct a "preferred" reading.

The audience, however, can produce an alternative reading that is either "negotiated' with or "oppositional" to the "preferred" one. The fact that Stam and Spence refer to these two readings as "aberrant" (646–647), however, reveals the extent to which film critics privilege a determinate or "fixed" text over its multiple inscriptions within multiple social contexts. Ethnic audiences who somehow fail to grasp the "preferred" meaning are not seen as active participants who utilize the strategies of various "interpretive communities" (Fish: 322; Burton:18–21) but as "aberrant" readers who miss the point. Such a theoretical position puts too much emphasis on the unmitigated power of Hollywood, and on the film critic who somehow escapes its "ideological effect."

At its core, the concept of the "preferred" reading raises the question as to who will determine what is preferred in the text. In the case of Chicano and other ethnic films, the "preferred" reading has often been defined by those aspects, mostly formal, that Anglo critics and reviewers understand. In short, reception becomes intention! And so, rather than conceptualize reception in terms of adherence to or aberrance from a fixed text, however defined, it proves more useful now to consider the ways in which reception determines the text or image.

The film reviews for *La Bamba* provide an striking instance of such difference in the reading of an ethnic-coded sign. In the issue over whether actor Lou Diamond Phillips, a Filipino-Hawaiian, resembled a Chicano, reviewers disagreed on whether the real Ritchie Valens himself looked Chicano. Several noted that Valens looked like a bull and had obvious "Indian heritage" that made him "look so cool" (*Village Voice; Time; Video*). The fact that Valens looked Indian and Phillips did not was cited as something "you can see…in any photo" (*Village Voice*). In most reviews, however, including those in the Hispanic press, ethnic representation was not an issue. But the reviewer in the *Los Angeles Times* saw another Valens altogether in claiming that "part of his appeal was how un-Latin he looked, with his freckles." Same photo, three different images: Indian, Chicano and Anglo.

In order to create a theoretical space for such difference in reception, I position Cortés's societal and media "curricula" within reception theorist Hans Robert Jauss's concept of the "horizon of expectations," which he defines as "the sum total of reaction, prejudgments, verbal and other behavior that greet a work upon its appearance" (3–45). The "horizon of expectations" describes the context within which viewers receive a film and can be divided into two broad categories: expectations derived from the film itself (genre, director, stars); and the aesthetic discourse on film. Though the latter often mediates or defines the former, little research has been done on how the aesthetic discourse on film prefigures consumption (Allen and Gomery: 257).

While film critics do have an impact on readers and each other (English: 74–88), most studies tend to reduce the nature of that impact to a comparison of popular tastes and critical opinion, which assumes that one can compare a quantity (audience attendance) with a quality (critical opinion). The fact that a person attended a film is taken as a vote in favor of the film. Other studies have audiences rate films and compare the results to critics' ratings (English: 126; Austin: *Critics*). The focus of these studies is an overall evaluation—excellent, fair and poor—that reduces the significance of the film to a question of purchase value.[9] Still, the impact of the aesthetic discourse on film can be described in general terms: "it tends to establish the critical vocabulary and frames of reference used not only by reviewers, but by film audiences as well" (Allen and Gomery: 90).

Sources were gathered from *The Reader's Guide to Periodicals, The Alternative Press Index, The Chicano Periodical Index, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times* and *Variety*. Overall, 30 publications representing at least nine distinct audiences were tracked. Some publications could legitimately belong to several classifications. *Cineaste*, for example, is a

film magazine (aesthetic) with a Marxist orientation (alternative); and although the editorial board claims otherwise, the journal could be considered academic, given its contributorship.

In examining the aesthetic discourse, I will not attempt to posit an actual impact, because too many variables would be involved: readers often subscribe to or read several publications, so the potential impact would depend upon an almost infinite number of combinations. Instead, the emphasis will be on what gets said where and for what (broadly defined) readerships. And on what does not get said, since—as Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun Times* points out—"critics can have the greatest impact by ignoring work" (English: 110). Given the scope of the paper, I will limit the analysis to the two prominent issues that arose in the press: the response to these films as a new cycle or development within the American film industry; and the use of the *"barrio"* as the dominant metaphor or framework for reading these films.

■ *Analysis: The Phenomenon*

In its review of *La Bamba*, *Newsweek* did not evaluate the film per se, but the incipient phenomenon the film's success seemed to promise: "Hispanic Hollywood." The phrase soon gained currency as a shorthand for the half dozen films in production and "more than twenty-five projects featuring Hispanic themes...floating around Hollywood."[10] The discussion of "Hispanic Hollywood" as an economic or social phenomenon took place within the context of general interest, business or industry publications: *Newsweek*; *Time*, in a special issue on Hispanic culture; *Americas 2001*, in a special issue on "Latinos in Hollywood;" *Americas*, an inter-American publication of the Organization of American States; *Advertising Age* and *Variety*, in its annual "Focus on Latin American and U.S. Hispanic Markets."[11] The *Los Angeles Times* and *New York Times* published six articles on *La Bamba* that explained the trend in terms of a "new" Hispanic market that Hollywood was "testing."[12]

The dominant explanation for these films—called Hispanic although all four were about Chicanos—was demographics coupled with the realization that Hispanics constituted a viable and distinct market that Hollywood could learn to target. According to market studies, the Hispanic population (estimated at 25 million) resembled the peak audiences of the 1930s and 1940s, who went to the movies on a regular basis (rather than to see a specific film) and as a family. Since the Hispanic population was concentrated in major urban areas, studios could reach the large Spanish-speaking audience with fewer dubbed or subtitled prints and a smaller, regional promotion campaign.

La Bamba, with a record 77 Spanish-language prints and a "Hispanic theme," was widely reported as the "first real test of the Hispanic market for American films" (Harmetz, *'Hollywood'*). Hollywood's recurrent "discovery" of the Hispanic market is, of course, a source of amusement and frustration among Chicanos. To its credit, *Advertising Age* recalls the "discovery" and "test" of the Hispanic market that accompanied *Zoot Suit* (1981), also directed by Luis Valdez (Walley). *La Bamba* would earn nearly $60 million in the United States, with the Hispanic market providing a two-to-one return on advertising costs over mainstream audiences. Columbia Pictures allocated five percent of its 1,250 prints and $6 million advertising budget to the Hispanic market, which accounted for 10 percent of the population and of the overall gross (Fabrikant; Valle, "Ritchie," *Newsweek*).

La Bamba and the more modest, but also profitable films *Born in East L.A.* and *Stand and Deliver* generated excitement in the press because Hispanic demographics and the Hollywood profit motive seemed to resolve racial conflict overnight without accommodation on either side.[13] Studio heads reiterated that their desire to make a profit had no racial bias. *La Bamba* was presented as a "noble experiment" that would either prove that the Hispanic market and Hispanic films were profitable or fail and

be forgotten (Harmetz, "Hollywood"). While Hollywood often nurtures a star (e.g., Bill Murray) or theme (e.g., baseball movies) through several failures in the hopes that a niche or market can be developed, industry executives did not afford Hispanic efforts the same opportunity. The trade journal *Variety* alone noted the contradiction in an article titled "Hispanic Mart Promises B.O. But Studio Pursestrings Tight" (Dawes).

Cuban American Ramón Menéndez, writer and director of *Stand and Deliver*, implicitly challenged the myth of demographics promulgated in the press, wherein the discovery and cultivation of an untapped "market" leads to social change: "The real problem is the lack of powerful Hispanic executives" (Corliss: 67). Still, Menéndez and the Chicano filmmakers subscribed to the Hollywood profit motive as a mechanism that could be used for cultural negotiation. Luis Valdez explained the rationale behind his use of the "universal themes" of Hollywood cinema: "I want to be part of the mainstream—as myself. What that requires is communicating artistically images and feelings society-at-large can understand....We can stay in our barrios and pour our venom into our little community newspapers or teatros but we are not going to create substantial change until we get into the mainstream."

Likewise, Richard "Cheech" Marin saw *Born in East L.A.* as a mainstream film that used comedy to raise social issues and make a profit, likening himself to Charlie Chaplin.[14] Despite this apparent (and much criticized) change from an alternative to mainstream film practice, the same appeal to or strategic use of "universal themes" characterizes the manifestoes of radical, alternative Chicano filmmakers during the heyday of the Chicano Movement's cultural nationalism (see Camplis).

Overall, the mass media placed the new "Hispanic Hollywood" within a historical context briefly described as a period of "limited roles" and "negative stereotypes." The vague sense of past racism isolated the new films from historical processes (including Chicano resistance and film production), which in turn added weight to the explanation that these films were demographics-driven. *Time*, *Americas* and *Americas 2001* were the only publications to offer historical overviews of the Chicano or Hispanic in Hollywood cinema. In *Americas*, a publication of the Organization of American States, even the stereotypes the article alludes to are upbeat and innocuous: "mariachis" and "beautiful señoritas" (Amador: 2). Given its political alignment, however, it is logical that Americas would repress material that might recall or evoke anti-United States sentiment.

Richard Corliss in *Time* presents a three-paragraph historical overview that contrasts the current difficult situation in which Hispanic filmmakers work with a benign past: "In the old days things were almost better," because, unlike other minorities, Hispanics were portrayed as such positive figures as the "Latin lover" and "camp goddess." As with *Americas*, *Time* begins its history after the "greaser" films, and ignores the *bandido* and buffoon stereotypes that coincide with the Latin lover. Corliss states that Hispanics did not appear on the screen between the 1950s and 1970s, implicating liberal Hollywood and Blacks, who became the subject of social problem films and, later, blaxploitation films. He fails to mention that social problem films about Blacks were pivotal in the demise of the Black independent production companies of the previous three decades (Bogle: 34). In any case, numerous social problem, historic message and western films have depicted Chicanos and Mexicans since the 1930s (Keller: 37).

Corliss's selective history reinforces the notion that minorities contend with each other in a zero-sum game, wherein one racial or ethnic group's gain is another's loss. Corliss also uses the dubious statement about a "liberal" Hollywood in order to bolster his conservative message that Hispanics must assimilate with the mainstream. Ironically, the period he cites as liberal is notable for its Production Code censorship, and the House Committee on Un-

American Activities investigations that made it dangerous to be a liberal in Hollywood.

In *Time*, the Chicano feature films of the late-1970s and early 1980s are not identified as such, but instead as "art-house fodder...[that]...staggered under the weight of their liberal messages." The Chicano filmmakers who made these films—which are by no means "art-house fodder," but include social melodramas and *rasquache* serio-comedies—are hidden behind a liberal-elite façade, summed up in the phrase "guilty conne[illegible]s." Corliss in effect substitute[illegible] liberal white audience [illegible] who arose out of the Ch[illegible] of the 1960s. Likewise, [illegible] Chicano audiences who sa[illegible] retextualizing C[illegible]ory as a liberal-conserv[illegible] which Hispanic films [illegible] "imposing" conflict bet[illegible] popular culture. In other words, the "cinema barrio" has to do with fine art and good (liberal) intentions—not the Chicano experience—while *El Norte* has to do with a "commercially appealing story line"—not the Chicano experience.

In *Americas 2001*, Antonio Rios-Bustamante challenges the selective history presented in *Time* and *Americas*. He examines the "Latin/Latina lover" as both a positive and negative image. While Corliss applauds the female "Mexican spitfires" as able to explode their roles with "wit and pizzazz," Rios-Bustamante links Lupe Velez's typecast career as the "Mexican spitfire" to her own suicide. He also cites the recurrent "greaser" stereotype that began with silent films, and details the protests and negotiations that took place in the studios—with Mexican actors such as Dolores Del Rio and Ramon Novarro—and in the Spanish-language newspapers, especially *La Opinion*.

Despite a rich history of Chicano representation and resistance, the mainstream or Anglo publications presented a selective history or context for the new wave of Chicano-produced films. Often it was a context that minimized Chicano agency, in order to play out an Anglo political drama well-suited to the issues or concerns of the Presidential campaign then dominating the news. When Chicanos were the focus, the emphasis was on a passive "market" that could be "exploited," rather than on the Chicano filmmakers and professional organizations and their two-decade struggle to bring their stories before the American public.

■ *Analysis: The Barrio*

Given the lack of historical awareness in the mainstream press, Chicanos continue to be written about as the most "localized" ethnic group. Such an act is more ideological than demographic, since it "localizes" the discourse on Chicanos to barrio issues, excluding Chicanos from the reportage and debates on "mainstream" and "national" issues.

La Bamba, *Born in East L.A.* and *Stand and Deliver* are set in East Los Angeles; while *The Milagro Beanfield War* is set elsewhere in the Southwest. But in contrast to the conventional depictions, these films attempt to redefine or reconceptualize the stereotyped "ethnic" spaces, especially through the use of genre. In place of the usual western, conquest or gang film, these new films use the American "success" genre or comedy. Film reviewers, however, did not cite or question past and present instances of "localized" Chicano images. That these films were about the barrio was a given, although how each reviewer translated or understood barrio ("neighborhood" or "slum") varied, and with it the reviewer's assumptions about the Chicano experience as film narrative. While I had expected to discover significant differences across ideological as well as ethnic lines in the press, such was not case. With few exceptions, Anglo reviewers or publications confined Chicanos to a barrio slum, while Hispanic reviewers or publications identified the barrio community as the starting point for Chicanos' placement within the national culture.

Because each film evokes different issues in the press about the barrio, I will approach the aesthetic discourse one-film-at-a-time in order of release before

drawing some general conclusions. Space limitations do not allow me to deal at length with the films themselves. In any case, an analysis of the cultural codes, cinematic structures and ideologies that inform these texts is the subject of another project. For now, I preface each section with a brief plot summary.

La Bamba

Luis Valdez's *La Bamba* is the biography of 1950s rock-n-roll star Ritchie Valens (nee Ricardo Valenzuela), who died at the age of 17 in the same plane crash that killed Buddy Holly in 1959. The Chicano/Hispanic newspapers *La Opinion* and *Unidad* hailed *La Bamba* as a realistic portrayal of the barrio. *La Opinion* declared that the film "*es nada más una historia sobre las gentes del barrio.*" *Unidad* added that the film evokes "*una justa medida de realismo de lo que es vivir como latino, con todo su color, emoción y hasta toque de lo sobrenatural.*" These reviews emphasize Valens's ethnic environment and the structural movement from north to south rather than the expected one al norte. Valens moves closer to his ethnic roots—Mexico and "La Bamba"—at the same time as he enters the mainstream: "*El filme trata con las búsqueda de identidad, y también del éxito*" (*Unidad*).

The Hispanic press saw *La Bamba* as a pivotal Chicano film in which the Chicano themes "*adquieren, por primera vez, características verdaderamente universales*" (*La Opinion*). As *Americas 2001* explained, *La Bamba* depicted the "daily struggles... [that] exist in every family." The universal themes were not believed to compromise the Chicano experience—with its unique culture that includes a little bit of the supernatural—but instead to provide an entry point for non-Hispanic audiences.15

El Tecolote, on the other hand, faults *La Bamba* as an American success film that superimposes an individualist and assimilationist ideology upon the Chicano community and its culture. The untold story of the barrio includes poor education, job discrimination, the new immigration law and English-Only initiatives. Rather than emphasize Chicano "organizing and struggle," Columbia Pictures and Luis Valdez exploited a market with a film that offered a "momentary surge of cultural pride."

Likewise, mainstream reviewers criticized Valdez for shaping "facts into fable" (*Time*). *La Bamba* represented "mythmaking," historical "hocus-pocus" (*New Yorker*), "mystical inflation" (*Rolling Stone*), and even a "soapy ethnic melodrama verging on camp" that begs the question, "Is any of this true?" (*Video*). The *Los Angeles Times* observed that "[t]here must have been a crunch somewhere as one culture accommodated another, and a lot of that is gone," while the *Village Voice* concluded that "Southern California's Mexican culture—with its own early rock and roll—hardly exists on film."

Reviewers objected to "Ritchie's denial of his roots and total buy-in to the American dream" (*Variety*), and believed that the film should have emphasized his subjective experience as a Chicano (also *Glamour*). These reviews were similar to the one in *El Tecolote* in their criticism of "mainstream dreamers" in the barrio. As *New Yorker* critic Pauline Kael explained: "He can be the pride of the Latino community (and still be innocuous enough to be like by the larger public.) The picture is a hangover from the fifties: he's a credit to his ethnic group."

While these criticisms appear to be the same, their contexts are not. *El Tecolote* serves a barrio audience, while the other publications write for an audience that is for the most part uninformed and unaffected. Also, in the issue after the review, *El Tecolote* provided a forum for Valdez to respond to these criticisms in a lengthy interview (Valdez, "An Artist"). In this respect, Pat Aufderheide's review in *In These Times* stands out from the non-Hispanic press, as do her subsequent reviews. Even though often critical, she is careful to locate *La Bamba* within the context of Chicano history, including Valdez's career since the agit-prop "actos" of El Teatro Campesino in the mid-1960s. The other Anglo reviewers criticize the film as "myth," without a corresponding

recognition of the "truth" from which Valdez is said to have turned, a "truth" I have previously identified as a "localized" discourse and selective history. This process in the mainstream and alternative press will become even more apparent in the section on *Stand and Deliver*.

Born in East L.A.

Richard "Cheech" Marin's directorial debut and first film without Tommy Chong is based on his popular music video parody of Bruce Springsteen's rock-anthem "Born in the U.S.A." A lesser known fact about the video and film is that both are based on a newspaper account about a Chicano born in East L.A. who was deported to Mexico.

Born in East L.A. lampoons the Simpson-Rodino Immigration Act and California's English-Only Initiative, while it alludes to FDR's "repatriation" program and Eisenhower's "Operation Wetback," which together deported over three million "Mexicans," most of whom were either born in the U.S. or legal immigrants. With few exceptions, however, the film did not receive coverage outside the Hispanic press, and Latin America, where the film won best script award at the New Latin American Cinema Festival in Havana, Cuba.

Most non-Hispanic periodicals explained that *Born in East L.A.* attempts to create sympathy for "wetbacks."[16] These reviews did not consider how the film redefines cinematic conventions about the barrio. For example, the establishing shot for the film is of a typical barrio home rather than streets filled with gang members and drug pushers. Also, barrio murals are photographed instead of the less prominent graffiti.

La Opinion, however, captures these subtleties in its headline, "*De las calles del barrio a la frontera mexicana.*" While the non-Hispanic reviews defined the narrative movement as from Tijuana to the U.S. border, *La Opinion* envisioned the movement from the point of view of "*un típico muchacho del Este de Los Angeles*" as he is wrongly deported. In an earlier review, *La Opinion* described the film's premier in East L.A. to emphasize the congruence between film and barrio: "*[H]acía mucho tiempo que el público de origen hispano de la ciudad de Los Angeles no veía una película con la que se sintiera identificado.*"

Unidad identifies the crucial distinction the film makes between East Los Angeles (Chicanos) and Tijuana (illegals). Rudy Robles (Marin), a third-generation Chicano who does not speak Spanish, neither sympathizes with illegal aliens (including his cousin) nor understands the extent to which American society views him as more Mexican than American. It is only when Robles is deported that he begins to change his point of view. Thus the film targets East Los Angeles as well as mainstream society.

Born in East L.A. ends with Robles and several hundred Mexicans overwhelming the U.S. border to the sound of Neil Diamond's "America." The *Los Angeles Times*, which found the film better than *La Bamba*, felt that there was "nothing cynical or satirical" about the scene: "You don't have to be a WASP to love your country, warts and all" (also *Variety*). *Cineaste*, however, thought that the ending was "politically naive in that it perpetuates the myth of boundless opportunities for illegal aliens in the U.S.," and gave no credence to Marin's response in its interview: "America is the land of opportunity, however it may temper that opportunity with persecution and discrimination." (Marin, "Cheech Cleans": 34). What no reviewer mentioned, was the fact that Robles and the multiethnic illegal aliens crossed the border not into the United States per se, but into East L.A.—the barrio—via the sewer system. Though cited as the film's funniest scene, the ending recalls the dangerous border crossing in *El Norte* (1983). Robles even brings a Salvadoran *novia* with him, so that their implied marriage symbolizes the impact of recent Salvadoran refugees on barrio life and culture.

The Milagro Beanfield War

Based on the John Nichol's 1974 novel, *The Milagro Beanfield War* is about an

unemployed Chicano who resists developers' efforts to turn his town into a resort when he diverts state-controlled water to cultivate a beanfield on his dead father's land. The film was directed by Robert Redford, and co-produced by Moctesuma Esparza, who owned the rights to the novel.

Because of Redford's prominence, location in *The Milagro Beanfield War* took on significance not as a real place, but as a symbolic one: "merry black-and-white moral landscape" (*American*); and "Redfordland…a dream of liberal community" (*Time*). Most reviewers identified the film as a "progressive fairytale" (*Guardian*) that ranged from "white liberal guilt" (*American Spectator*) to "wishful thinking" (*Newsweek*; *Commonweal*).

The conservative *American Spectator* criticized the Chicano characters as unrealistic liberal stereotypes: "[T]hey're one-dimensional icons of noble poverty, courtesy of the cliche-infested, liberal-guilt-ridden imagination of a rich white movie star." Surprisingly, liberal and middle-of-the-road periodicals also objected to the film's reversal of the terms of the conquest narrative, so that the "noble peasant" now triumphed over "gringo indignities" (*Village Voice*; *New Republic*; *New York*). The liberal Catholic periodicals *America* and *Commonweal* even aimed some self-criticism at their earlier "1960s liberalism," with its "naive optimism" in the efficacy of "good intentions," which the film revived.

Time, which locates the film in "Redfordland," begins its review with a paean to Redford's style, but in the process reduces the Chicano characters to little more than landscape: "The kiss of two fine brown faces is silhouetted by an orange sunset. Night falls, and there's a rope of rainbow in the sky; a frosted moon smiles behind a scrim of mist. Nature has rarely gone to the movies in starker, more glamorous clothes."

These unnamed characters are reduced to color. The passive voice further denies their role as participants, so that they become instead an aesthetic experience: "Nature." The passage links the "brown faces" to the "frosted moon" through facial actions (kiss, smile) and color (brown, frosted or white).

The Hispanic press identified *The Milagro Beanfield War* with Chicano history, rather than with Redford's "passionate humanism" or visual style (*Time*). *Unidad* put the film into a political perspective: "[T]he first major movie to take up the issue of the theft and struggle for Chicano lands in the Southwest." *La Opinion* called *The Milagro Beanfield War* "*un 'milagroso' filme que nos recuerde el orgullo de nuestro origen*," and, in an earlier review, identified that pride with "*la lucha contra la adversidad y el materialismo.*"[17]

Seen within the context of Chicano culture, "magic realism" did not detract from the film, as the *Los Angeles Times* and *Village Voice* argued, but instead helped it become a poetic "*monumento a la identidad hispana en Norteamerica*" (Rodríguez). Thus the film was seen as pivotal in the history of "magic realism" and its dissemination to North America. Like *Unidad*, *La Opinion* thought that the film would educate non-Hispanics, but placed even greater emphasis on the film's impact on Hispanic pride, telling its readers to see the Spanish version: "*Disfrutela y recuerde que nuestra herencia hispana es lo mas valioso que tenemos.*"

Clearly, the faults identified within the mainstream or Anglo press must be seen not as absolute shortcomings inherent in the text, but as perceived ones particular to the (re)viewer and his or her cultural-political-class nexus.

Stand and Deliver

Stand and Deliver is "based on the true story" of Jaime Escalante, a math teacher at Garfield High School in East Los Angeles who gained national attention in 1982 when 18 students passed the Advanced Placement exam in calculus. The Educational Testing Service accused the students of cheating, forcing them to take the exam again.

Like *Born in East L.A.*, the film was inspired by newspaper accounts and takes place in the present-day East Los Angeles barrio. The non-Hispanic press described the barrio as a problem space;

while the Hispanic press described the barrio as "*nuestra comunidad*," a place with pride and achievement despite outside racism and neglect. Religious, Marxist, liberal and conservative publications alike referred to the barrio as an impoverished "environment": "gang-plagued, predominantly Hispanic" (*The Christian Century; Newsweek*); "poor people and slums" (*Nation; People; Cineaste; Guardian; New York*); "drugs, joblessness, and early pregnancy" (*Christianity Today*); and a "war zone" (*Los Angeles Times*). Often Garfield High was treated as the representative "inner-city school," described as a "mess" (*Village Voice*) that perpetuated "an underclass programmed to fail" (*Time*), or "cycles of poverty and degradation" (*Commonweal*).

While these descriptions suggest a social criticism, most often it was the barrio community itself that was seen as holding back the students. In explaining the problems students faced, reviewers cited "the absence of competent parents and teachers" (*Village Voice*); gangs, "thoughtless and irresponsible parents," and demoralized teachers (*Glamour*); and "peer and home pressures" (*El Tecolote*) that explain "why barrio kids have a hard time doing their homework" (*New York Times*). The solution was likewise found within the barrio in either a "barrio hero" (*Time; Newsweek; Christianity Today*) or in the realization that the "seeming limitations of environment and resources are only artificial barriers that can be overcome with hard work and the right attitude" (*Variety*).

Three publications—evangelist, Hispanic and alternative—cite broader explanations for the crisis in inner-city schools like Garfield. *Christianity Today* explains that "socioeconomic class [and not race] is the biggest predictor of academic success." The review thus reveal "hard work and the right attitude" or *ganas* to be social constructs rather than individual attributes. The somewhat Marxist analysis, however, becomes subsumed under the evangelist paradigm, wherein the "visionary" teacher initiates students to the "Quest." *El Tecolote*, which cites "peer and home pressures," and *Guardian* reject the "barrio hero" and "hard work" as solutions, especially given racism and "economic inequalities." But despite the film's perceived conservative message and emphasis on Escalante rather than the students, both reviews recommend the film, "because it shows Latinos as people, not stereotypes."

Although most reviews discuss the film's narrative weaknesses and the social impact that is said to compensate for them, few consider whether *Stand and Deliver* challenges usual film conventions about the barrio. In fact, the discourse in the mainstream and alternative press segregates questions of ethnic content from questions of filmic form, as though the two had nothing to do with each other.[18] *Nation* reveals this conceptual blind spot in its review, which identifies the film's challenge to the conservative Hollywood formula as "the mere notion of using poor people and slums as something other than a battleground between cops and drug peddlers..." The use of "poor people and slums" to describe an ethnic community belies the reviewer's subsequent criticism that the film "leaps over...any fresh knowledge or insight." On the other side of the political fence, *Newsweek* quotes Writer-Director Ramón Menéndez on his efforts to dispense with "expected cliches" and depict instead "the Latino experience," then undermines his point with a casual reference to "the inevitable gang jackets" observed at Garfield High School. The statement makes manifest the assumption that gangs are "inevitable" in (and particular to) the barrio.

Time, which described the Chicanos in *The Milagro Beanfield War* as landscape, further objectifies Chicanos in its review of *Stand and Deliver*. The review begins in dramatic fashion with three words: "Drugs, rape, murder." Because these social problems are unsuited to nature metaphors, the review turns to a cinematic one: "inner-city school life can be a recurrent horror movie." The review then describes "a barrio hero" who solves these problems on the screen and in real life. The connection between

social violence and the horror film, however, is misplaced, since neither drugs, rape nor murder ever figure in the actual or depicted events.

Since the Hispanic press did not see the barrio as a problem space (but as a cultural space with achievements, problems, and so on), reviews emphasized the film's role as the most realistic and positive communal portrait to date. *La Opinion* praises *Stand and Deliver* as an authentic representation of "*el tipo de vida que se desarrolla en medio de las abigarrados y coloridas calles del Este de Los Angeles*" (also *Unidad*). *Americas 2001* locates Garfield High "comfortably behind Whittier Blvd.…in the heart of East Los Angeles." The review then describes how Garfield is perceived within the community: first for its "classic rivalry" with another high school; then later for its college-bound graduates. In a historical note, the review adds that "[t]en years ago, Garfield was known for its absenteeism and its youth gangs…"

The few non-Hispanic publications that historicize the school's real problems, place them in 1982, the year in which the film takes place (*Mother Jones*; *Los Angeles Times*; *New York*). Escalante, however, began teaching at Garfield High in 1974; and five students first took the AP exam in 1979 (Hubbard; Harmetz, "Math"). Former students and Escalante himself also explain that, unlike the film, there were no gang members or *cholos* in the class; in fact, most students were already college-bound (Valle, "Real-Life"; Harmetz, "Math"). It is telling, then, that several reviewers complain that the gang problem is not emphasized enough in the film and that Escalante's success seems "too easy" (*Glamour*; *Variety*; *Village Voice*; *New York*).

In *New York*, David Denby complains, "Victory comes too easily, without enough resistance and backsliding. And what kids! They have to be among the tamest, sweetest ghetto teens in history." Denby, like Richard Corliss in *Time*, conjures up a history he needn't document, since—like any prejudice—it is already well-known. When Denby compares *Stand and Deliver* to Dennis Hopper's gang film *Colors*, he concludes that "the violent, despairing *Colors* is the one that has the ring of *truth*" (italics mine). This is, after all, the "truth" about Chicanos in Los Angeles that reaches him in New York through the news media.

Such were the expectations on the horizon of the film's mainstream release.

■ *Conclusion*

The most obvious and significant breakdown that occurs within the publications, and one that obviates all other differences, is the one between the Hispanic and non-Hispanic press. Liberal non-Hispanic publications often relied on the same outsider's assumptions about the barrio that characterize the conservative publications. The barrio was a problem space, denied a history, culture and separate point of view. Thus the films were often placed in the context of a "social problem," rather than in the context of cultural identity or even film history.

The issue of "universal" themes best reveals the manner in which critics and reviewers do not consider the Chicano perspective(s). The non-Hispanic publications denounce the imposition of universal values upon Chicano culture, a patronizing stance that implies, "don't become middle class and flattened out (like us)." In *La Opinion* and other Chicano publications, the Chicano experience is understood to be something Chicanos alone have access to in these films, something we bring to these films: a culture. Thus the universal themes were not seen as an imposition on Chicano culture, but as a transmitter that might expand the non-Hispanic "horizon of expectations," changing the very nature of "universal" values.

The non-Hispanic press, however, often responded to these films with silence. The *Reader's Guide to Periodicals* lists just one review for *Born in East L.A.* And while it also lists 15 reviews for *The Milagro Beanfield War*, the fact that most deal with Robert Redford cum celebrity is itself a form of silence. *Time* reveals a

third kind of silence in its objectification of the Chicano as either nature (landscape) or culture (horror films).

It is too early to tell whether "Hispanic Hollywood" as such will continue and whether these films have changed the "horizon of expectations." But as film scholars, we must be careful not to displace that horizon with our own theoretical expectations. Instead, we must discern the interpretive communities that are active in constructing meaning, that reveal the text to be a process and not a product. And when we look to the "horizon of expectations" beyond the "cinema barrio," we must be sure to ask, Whose expectations? Whose barrio? ❐

ENDNOTES

1 Throughout the essay, I use the term Hispanic to refer to U.S. citizens of Latin American descent. I do so in order to reflect the actual usage in the press. While some might object to Hispanic on ideological grounds, I find the alternative, Latino, fraught with the same problems: Both terms originate with the European colonial or neocolonial powers and neither acknowledges our African and Indian heritage.

2 Special thanks to Tomás Ybarra-Frausto for his invaluable advice and encouragement in support of this project.

3 The parenthetical style is used in this essay. In the text and bibliography, I cite the reviews for each film by publication rather than by author. All other sources are cited by author.

4 Keller 27; Ríos-Bustamante 7–8; Cortés; Candelaria; Morales.

5 Interview by author and Lillian Jiménez with Severo Pérez, February 3, 1990; and Rosen 11–28.

6 East Los Angeles College M.E.Ch.A. Jeffries presents an Anglo apologetic for these films.

7 Woll; Pettit; Cárdenas and Schneider; Keller.

8 Cortés, "Chicanas" 96–97; see also Cortés, "Societal;" Cortés, *Greaser's*. Hall (340–341) and Jauss (41) make the same point about the education role of the media and the external factors that affect a text's reception.

9 The above remarks are based on an examination of the following annotated bibliographies: Austin, "Film Audience"; Austin, "Update"; Austin, "Research."

10 Review of *Stand and Deliver* in *Mother Jones*.

11 See the review of *La Bamba* in *Newsweek*; Corliss; Ríos-Bustamante; Amador; Walley; Besas; and Dawes.

12 Fabrikant; Goldstein; Harmetz, "Hollywood"; Snowden; Valle, "Ritchie"; and Valle, "La Bamba."

13 The resolution, however, was limited to a mutual economic exploitation that left racial attitudes unchallenged.

14 Valdéz, "An Artist"; Valdéz, "Luis"; Marín; Marín, "Cheech Cleans"; and Marín, "Cheech Marín."

15 *U.S. News and World Report* also identifies the film as both Chicano and universal.

16 *People; Variety; The New York Times. The Los Angeles Times* was the only mainstream periodical to identify the dual theme: "the second-class nature of American citizenship for ethnic minorities and the desperate situation in which illegal aliens find themselves."

17 This statement undermines the generalizations in the mainstream press that equate ethnic middle-class status or aspirations with material gain and the loss of cultural identity.

18 Pat Aufderheide's review (*In These Times*) is a rare exception, arguing that the division "only works if there isn't human experience on either side of the dichotomy."

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MI GENTE

Pablo Figueroa

Independent filmmaker Pablo Figueroa was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico and was raised in East Harlem. He graduated from the City College of New York in 1962 with a degree in English and directed plays and worked in television before turning to the film medium. A pioneer among Puerto Rican filmmakers in the U.S., Pablo has chosen to make intimate films that focus on the Puerto Rican experience. His first narrative film, Cristina Pagan *(1976), is the story of a young mother who is helped to accept the death of her daughter through spiritualism, which Pablo calls the "folk-type mental health clinic" of the people of Puerto Rico.* Delores *(1988), made in collaboration with the Committee on Hispanic Children and Families, is a powerful, provocative film about domestic violence in our community. Active for many years in Latino arts organizations and in independent filmmakers' groups, Pablo is currently working on a feature-length film about Puerto Rican bike messengers.*

In interviews with Lillian Jiménez and Blanca Vázquez, Pablo relates his involvement with theater and film, and why he has made an artistic choice to work in the narrative form. The interview was edited by Blanca Vázquez. Photo/Adal Maldonado

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When did you first become interested in film?
In a sense I was always gravitating towards film, film was a first love. As a very young kid I was going to the RKO theater on 116th Street and the Loew's at least three times a week. You got two films every week and usually there was a grade A and a B or C film. At first it was a liberating thing to see a whole new world, to immerse myself in something that was totally not of my life. But eventually I found myself watching film in a different way than most of the kids, mostly from the technical point of view. It was the most fascinating thing to watch. I forgot the film now, but I remember the scene of these two couples bathing, and how they ran out onto the beach and started a scene and then suddenly they're dry, which raised the whole problem of continuity. But it fascinated me, and I saw the film about three times, just for that scene. Then I began to see, I almost shouted "Eureka!" in the theater when I realized that these scenes weren't shot at the same time. It was an incredible discovery and that, of course, hooked me.

How old were you when that happened?
I must have been 12 or so. And of course there were always films like *Rear Window*, films from right after the war that became classic to me, and a lot of the Hitchcock films were coming out then. I went to see them as film, I didn't go to see them as Hitchcock or whatever.

Did you see any Spanish-language films?
Yes, my sister was very much into Spanish-language film. There was a theater on 109th and Madison called "*el meaito.*" I forgot the real name of the theater but everybody referred to it as *el meaito* because it stank of urine all the time [*laughing*]. Anyway, that's where you saw all those Mexican films. At the same time El Hispano theater on 116th street would put on shows and a Mexican film. We saw Libertad Lamarque's films, and all these singers from South America and that was what attracted me to theater. They used to have these amateur nights every week which were the funniest shows ever [*laughing*]. It was an incredible thing, there was audience participation at the highest level; people went there with tomatoes and they threw them at the stage. There were amateur singers, dancers, mostly entertainment. Once in a while you would have a dramatic scene that somebody would do and, of course, those always got pelted with tomatoes and eggs [*laughing*]. But that always fascinated me, the audience participation.

How did you get started working in film?
During the war on poverty programs a lot of companies began to hire Latinos. NBC was at the forefront of getting more Latinos involved in media. There was a local documentary program on NBC called New York Illustrated. The same department that created that program began to do documentaries about Latinos and I got involved in a few of them. One that was important to me was called the Hispanic Policeman, which dealt with the relationship of the police department to the Hispanic community. That particular documentary drew on an incident that had happened in the South Bronx. Two policemen had walked into the home of a Puerto Rican family and beat up everybody. Supposedly, there had been some sort of fight and some neighbors called the police. By the time the police came the fight was over. There was a young man there, an 18-year-old, who opened the door and he had a dog. The dog began to attack the police, and the police got very angry and then that whole macho thing came into play; the guy didn't want the police to come in because the fight was over. One of the cops was Puerto Rican and they just came in there and beat up the whole family. It was not a major news event but we covered it and did a documentary on the family in order to get it from that point of view.

What was the impetus behind making Cristina Pagan?
When we did that first show at NBC dealing with the Puerto Rican family, I had this idea of doing a series of films dealing with those cultural resources of the family that had allowed us to survive here in the United States. It was going to deal with spiritualism and with work. I mean, my parents worked extremely hard, and I wanted to do a film on the whole work ethic of Puerto Ricans. I also wanted to do a film about the relationship of women to men, the whole

complex relationship of *machismo* and *marianismo*. I wanted to show the negative and the positive side of the relationship between mother and child, which I think is very unique, especially the way that mothers relate to male children.

Cristina Pagan was going to explore the whole mystical spiritual thing that Puerto Ricans are into. It's the story of a mother who cannot accept the death of her child. I wanted to study the consequences of her upbringing in the spiritualist tradition in Puerto Rico, the belief system that says that spirits are born simple and unsophisticated and must grow through a process of reincarnation. The other aspect of this is that spirits can interact with the living and, indeed, the way that the spiritualist looks at the human being is that the human being is made up of three parts: there is the *ser propio*, which is one's own personality; there are guardian spirits; and then there are these molesting spirits. If you really look at it, Sigmund Freud called each one of these things by different names, but he's talking about the same thing, you know, the superego, the ego and the id, so it's nothing new. This spiritual picture of the human being has been there for a long, long time, that's the belief system that I grew up with because my father was *un espiritista* and it permeates the culture, even for people who don't quite fully understand it because it's part of the culture of Puerto Rico.

How did you show that dimension of the culture, what techniques did you use?
It is *set* in that situation. You have, for example, the relationship of the mother to the child, the spirit of the child being there with her. When the film begins the child is present; what happens is that the mother is having breakfast with her husband. We see the moment the husband leaves, he goes into the living room to get his coat, and then kisses his wife goodbye and he leaves. The moment that she locks the door, she turns to the living room and says to the daughter, "Get ready, we have to go to school." Most people don't realize when they first see the film that the daughter is not there when the husband walks into the living room, and suddenly the daughter is there and it's incredible.

She's there from the point of view of the mother.
Yes. The audience does not see at the beginning that the daughter is not there, and then sees it and accepts that the daughter is there. To me the great thing about film is that people interpolate things, because what eventually happens is that they begin to accept that the daughter is alive. Two thirds into the film you realize that the daughter is dead and that the mother has been interacting with a spirit. Depending on where you come from, if you're Freudian you say that the mother is hallucinating; if you're an *espiritista* you say that this mother is interacting with a spirit. Eventually the *espiritista* appears in the film to separate this interaction. What happens is that the mother has to give up this relationship with the daughter if the daughter is to go through that process of growth that the spirit has to go through.

The film was done for television. It never got on NBC. Eventually it was picked up by KCET, the Latino Consortium presented it, and it was aired on public television. It was a very interesting thing. I thought that was going to be the end of the life cycle of the film. There is a woman, Prof. Hill, who teaches social work at Columbia University, and she has used the film as part of an incredible lecture, where she juxtaposes spiritualism to Freudian psychology. Of course, she knows them both from a professional point of view. And it's very interesting to see when she gives these talks usually to psychiatrists and mental health clinicians who at first come in and say, "Oh, this is nonsense," and when they leave, they leave with an entirely different point of view about things that they thought was just crazy nonsense. Spiritualism was the folk-type mental health clinic of the people of Puerto Rico. So, the film began its own life in that circuit, which had never occurred to me, and it's now being used by all these schools.

Did you have community screenings of Cristina Pagan?
I have shown the film to community people and that's always a revelation. The Black Filmmakers Foundation, who distributes the film, had a traveling show during the summers and they would show films in usually open spaces throughout the city.

One time they were showing films in front of El Museo del Barrio. And the audience was mothers with their kids right off the street. My film was the third film in the program and it was preceded by some documentaries. There was a documentary about music, the kids were playing and running around and carrying on, and I said, "My film is going to be lost in this situation," because it's a very quiet, very small film in a sense.

It's very personal.
Yes, very personal. So I thought that no one was going to see the film, it was going to be a wasted half hour. It was very funny because Miriam Cruz [*who plays Cristina in the film*] and her husband and children came to see the film that day. The film goes on and suddenly there's this quiet in the audience and everybody starts watching this film. None of the kids get up and the mothers are quiet, you could hear a pin drop—I really didn't expect that at all. When the film was over, people were crying. Miriam Cruz was introduced and the women didn't want to let her go. They went on and on, I mean, they were treating her like a star. And then I started to think back: how does this happen? You know, the need that our people have for images of themselves. The film starts in a kitchen and the moment that kitchen opens up, it's an image that they recognize. It's like an icon, an icon of recognition. Even the kids recognized that the language. When you see that response to the film, you realize the need that people have to see themselves.

And the absolute power of it.
Yes, and the thing is that the film doesn't even have to be good; it's not a matter of the film being good or bad. It's just that you have this tremendous need to see that which you know, and to see it in a way that I call the artistic principle. What I mean by that is that you see reality all the time and then an artist takes that reality and puts it in a situation that allows you to look at it from another point of view, from a point of view of comprehension, of analyzing it in such a way that it becomes digestible. I think reality in the real world is undigestible. But then you lift it away, you struggle through it. To be able in a sense to set a distance and at the same time bring you close, that's what art does; it's this ability to free you from yourself for a second or two.

I think that the need to work with a familiar iconography is very important. In a sense the reason why Plato didn't want the artist in his Republic is because that type of relationship frees the person from the social constraints that society puts on people. It really allows you to look at society from a point of view that the people who rule society don't want you to look at. That to me is the real service that the artist does for human beings. It is that ability to say to them: shed all of that for a second and look at your humanity. And we need that because without it we become the robots that the powers that be want us to be. Through the arts we're constantly getting back to seeing ourselves, to seeing that humanity. I think that a people that is prevented from seeing themselves is a colonized people. The censorship of our art is a key part of that colonization, and until we find a way of breaking that censorship, I don't think that the colonized mentality is ever going to be done away with.

How did you get involved with Dolores?
At the time when *Cristina Pagan* was being used by the various social service organizations and schools, the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families saw *Cristina Pagan* and did a workshop with the film. Elba Montalvo, [*executive director of the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families*], then talked to me about the possibility of doing another film on battered women. Since *Cristina Pagan* had worked so well with their workshop on the Puerto Rican family, they thought it would be great if we could also do a film for battered women as part of their project.

Why did you choose a narrative?
We went through a whole series of conversations as to what type of film to do. Originally, Elba liked the way that *Cristina Pagan* dealt with this issue at a level that was understandable to most people. Many of the films that are available to social service agencies are documentaries. I think that documentary is an elitist form. Documentaries tend to be very didactic and they really tend to put the average person who is used

to watching soap operas on television to sleep. We immediately realized this wasn't the way to go. If we really want to reach a woman who's watching a soap opera to do something about her life, we had to do it in a language that she understood, that she was used to and comfortable with.

So you started out with a film totally committed to audience and you chose a language and a form that was accessible for that audience.
Yes, definitely. It was aimed at a particular audience and we knew what that audience was like. We knew the problems that the woman was going through. A battered woman is a woman whose emotions are very raw, so we wanted to reach her at that level, we knew that we had to put these ideas across emotionally. There was not going to be any intellectualism. We were not going to deal with the issue of battering, we were going to deal with the *reality* of battering and hopefully put the ideas across through that.

But you did make reference to literature. There are metaphors in the film, there are subtleties, it's not all obvious.
But those things should not be obvious. My feeling is that, yes, the artist is using literature or metaphors to reinforce what is being said but it should not be obvious. For example, the allusion to *la vida es sueno* and the whole dream reference in the film. That's why Dolores at the end says, "No more dreams, it's time to wake up." That idea came to me while interviewing one of the women. She used the metaphor of a nightmare, and I thought she meant it in the usual way. She said, "No, I was asleep. I was dreaming a lie in which everything was beautiful. I mean, I loved this man and he loved me and that love was beautiful. But I was being beaten at the same time. I totally refused to see the beatings and only looked at this dream that I had of love between a woman and a man living together with a family—that whole idea of what a family is like, that dream of what a family is like, I was living in that situation, and in a sense was not paying any attention to the beatings."

When she started talking like that she said it in a way that made me *see* it. For the most part we are given a dream world to live in and when you really think about that, it's something that all of us have to some degree or other. I mean, it comes to the fore when you're in a situation like battering, and then you have to decide to wake up from the dream or else you die. But we're all living in a dream world that the society gives us. The whole idea of what family is, is a dream. We never look at family the way family really is with all the problems and all the things that families are going through. By the way, that's why in finding the place to shoot the film, not having enough money to really build the set, we were lucky to find a house that had a white picket fence around it. Everything looked so beautiful and so nice on the outside and this horror was going on inside.

You've been consciously making films for a working class audience for some time. What filmic language do you use, what are the elements?.
It has to be a language that makes icons of that experience, it has to be based on the people, on your audience, so that it's a one to one relationship between the art form and the audience. If you look at drama, from the very beginning there's been these two major forms: tragedy and melodrama. Tragedy was supposedly the upper-class form, it was the form that dealt with the kings and queens and the Gods, and that sort of thing. And melodrama was the one that dealt with the people. It's very interesting because "melo" in Greek means music, it's where the word melody comes from, so that music was an integral part of that dramatic form. And of course, music tends to be the most international art form, the one that is the most popular in any culture. So if you're going to make films that are aimed at that group of people, it has to be melodramatic film, it has to be a film that is based on the looks, on the culture, on all the nitty gritty aspects of who people are. *Dolores* is a very melodramatic film, it uses melodrama to a very *n*th degree. I always have problems if so-called intellectuals come and watch it [*laughing*], they tend to put their nose up at it. But if they see the reaction of people—and this has happened—where somebody thought it was too melodramatic and then they see the reaction...

The audience I saw it with was so engaged that they were talking to the screen.
Melodrama has that reputation, and there's a reason for it. To me all of this is political. People in power don't want this type of film to be made. It liberates people and that is very, very dangerous in this society. And then what happens is that a lot of our people who want to become filmmakers and writers, they go the schools run by these upper-class people and there they learn to speak a totally different language which is mostly art for art's sake. If you make a film that is about art, somehow that's a better type of film than a film that deals with human beings. I've always been very much against that. When I went to college I rebelled against it, because to me, this concept of art for art's sake went against the greatest literature that we've had throughout the history of mankind. When we look at literature, even European literature, you find that the greatest works are not these art for art's sake work, but works about human beings. From Shakespeare to Lope de Vega, go back to the Greeks, I mean go back and look at the Italian writers, it's always about people. And they tend to be very melodramatic. Of course, the schools clean them up and try to look at them not as melodrama. But what is Hamlet? Pure melodrama.

Today you wouldn't think of Shakespeare as playing to the masses.
But we are so distant because now it sounds foreign to us, and we think that it's difficult to understand. But that guy who paid a penny to get into the Globe theater understood that language just like we understand Eddie Murphy today on the screen. And all the dirty jokes that are in Hamlet that we no longer hear because we don't know what they referred to, that person there understood. That realization that came to me very early when I went to college. I said, "No, that's not the way I want to go, I want to make films and theater that really talks to people." What happened is that I started with theater and I found that theater was too expensive. I think theater is much more expensive than film because the expense is not how much the production costs, it's how much it costs in relationship to how much money you make back.

So what happened was that *Dolores* had to be melodrama and it had to use all of those aspects of melodrama to rouse an audience. I think that's why *Dolores* works so well, because it has all those things.

Part of what you get into in Dolores *is how raw the emotions are—the audience talking to the screen, the real engagement, this constant interaction with the film. Did you expect that?*
Well, I was hoping [*laughing*]. In writing the script I was hoping that people would interact. I think of film as being almost like a machine that plays back people's emotions. And these images are being sent out to elicit certain emotions, which I think is what makes a film or any art form viable. I see myself writing the dialogue or writing scenes that will elicit those kinds of reactions. There's a sort of curving line that runs throughout the script that builds up a theme and then ends it, then starts another theme and then ends it, and so on, and slowly you're building up the emotional content of the film to a pitch and then it explodes. I write scripts with that very conscious idea in my mind.

There are some obvious things. For example, in the scene when the mother is talking to Dolores in the van about her own experience of being beaten, and her acceptance of her situation; the mother has *ese sufrimiento*, a belief in "that's how we were made." Dolores gives her a look, that is almost like—she doesn't condemn her but it's like…it's a hard thing to describe. It's great that Rosalba Rolón [*who plays Dolores*] did that because it's something that you hope will happen, and when it happens and you catch it on camera, you're so lucky. And when the mother accepts this thing I've heard some women in the audience go [*sigh*], "How can she be proud of putting up with this?" But we do it constantly and I think that what has happened among Puerto Ricans is this idea that it's the lot of women to accept this suffering, *hay que sufrir* because *eso es lo que Dios nos manda* and we accept that. And we're proud in saying in it.

Well, we accept it because it's the price of keeping the family together. If we start not accepting it, those families don't stay together.
There are reasons why we accept it and the thing about it is that the mother says that all

she got was that the father said "I'm sorry" before he died. That was the payment for all that suffering. Basically what I wanted to do that was to say, yes, you're accepting all of that suffering and sometimes we're very proud of it. It's almost like *eres una santa si aceptas eso*, that type of attitude.

And those words are like cliches.
Yes, total cliches. And the use of cliches in the film is very important. And I know that the intellectual crowd hates them, but to me cliches are very important because they have been the way that the mind has been controlled.

And women will repeat those cliches because they are so common that they almost become the culture.

Definitely. I think those things were put in there by those in power, those sentiments are reinforced over centuries to keep people down. In the scene where Dolores is with her mother outside in the garden and the mother says, "*Nosotros venimos a este mundo para sufrir*" ["We come into the world to suffer"] and Dolores says "*No me hables más de sufrimiento*," ["Don't talk to me anymore about suffering"], Dolores walks away from the mother and she's standing there and talking about the fact that the husband broke her arm and all of the things that she had given into, and still he hasn't changed. Then you see the hand of the mother coming onto Dolores' shoulder and she's saying, "*Nosotros venimos a sufrir,*" and Dolores pushes her hand away and we cut to a close-up of the mother as Dolores walks away; then we cut to Dolores on the other side. It's a series of three shots that physically breaks Dolores' relationship with the mother, that type of enslavement that the mother accepts. Then Dolores gives her long speech about how she saw her mother go through this and she's seeing her children go through it and she hated the mother; she hated the father, but she hated the mother for accepting it. And now she's seeing her children beginning to hate her. The theme of *Dolores* is really about this woman's rebellion against her society. She goes against the mother, she goes against the husband and if there had been a priest there, she would have gone against the priest. In a sense it's really a revolution that she goes through. And it's about the process she goes through in that revolution. Of course, in her case, it has to do with the future of her kids.

Is domestic violence a subject matter that you might have done if it hadn't been solicited from the outside?
When I did *Cristina Pagan* I wanted to do a series of films about the Puerto Rican family. I went to PBS and to tried to raise the money. It was going to deal with how the resources of the family structure have allowed us to survive. One of the things that I wanted to deal with was *machismo*, not quite in the way that *Dolores* deals with it. Actually it was very funny because I was struggling in *Dolores* to open the film up into a story about the male and the female, both stories. The problem is that the money came for a specific subject and it was controlled by people who wanted to use it for their purpose, which is fine, I'm not putting that down. But obviously, I could not develop the character of the male to the extent that I wanted.

What would the man's story have been like?
Well, I think that one of the major problems that colonized people have, especially the males, is this whole lack of sense of their manliness or masculinity, which I think is imposed by the colonizer. You basically create an image of the man, not mankind, but of the man in which the manly characteristics are highly overblown and valued. At the same time, those aspects become so overpowering that the person is incapable of functioning. What happens is that the reality that he lives out, since he's powerless, is out of synch with his sense of what a man is supposed to be.

Which is powerful, in control and commandeering.
Yes, yes, all of those things. And those things work very nicely because it means that the person is incapable of acting, is incapable of functioning. What it means to be a man is so overblown that there's no way that he's going to fulfil them, especially since he has no power to do so. And, of course, it is handed out with a very black and white ideal of what a human being is: there's two types of human beings, there's a

feminine type and a male type and never the twain can meet. Of course, the reality is that there's no such thing; a human being is a human being and we partake of all aspects of the masculine and the feminine.

If you had been able to tell the male character's side of the story in Dolores, *what would it have been like?*
There were certain prescriptions that we needed. One of the things we wanted to stay away from was the myth that battering only happens among poor people. Also, we didn't want to portray the very rich, so we basically hit upon a working class type of person. I don't know if I were to deal with the whole issue of *machismo* whether I would deal with it at that level. I might have, but I think it's much more dramatic at another social level. I think that, for example, that it is *machismo* that is killing our kids in the street. Why a kid who gets dissed by a simple nothing would take out a gun and kill somebody without any qualms about it, I think that's *machismo*.

If anything popularized at a street level the technology of killing, it was Miami Vice. *It made automatic weapons and those sub-Uzis attractive and the people who carried them attractive.*
It was literally a commercial for those things, and I'm sure that the companies that produce those things must have paid very heavily for those commercials. I did some research for a documentary about teenage violence once, and one of the things that I found out talking to a man who runs an organization called the Dome was that a Beretta, the gun, lists for about $600 or $800. He said that our kids can get it for $150 on the street. I mean, somebody's making those things available, it doesn't just happen. It's not just that the kids go out to search for guns, the guns literally drop in their hands.

I think that it is that *machismo* syndrome that has to be broken. That for me is a subject matter that I want to deal with vis a vis our young men. It's always been said that *machismo* has some positive value to it. I don't think so. It's a very interesting thing. You find that the men from Europe who ran those countries were very effeminate. The whole upper class of England, the men were very effeminate. In other words, they allowed their whole humanity to come through; they were as much men as they were women. They didn't need to have this very strong definition of *machismo*, and you find in the upper classes of Europe that those are the people who know themselves because they knew the whole panoply of who they were.

And then, of course, what they do is that they impose on the colonized people a very strict definition of what a man is and of what a woman is. Just think about it. Who ruled those countries? Women ran those countries as much as men. I mean, Queen Isabela was the queen of Spain; look at England, all the female queens that ran those countries. So that women in the upper classes in Europe—this whole thing of women's liberation, in the upper classes there's no such thing. The people who rule don't need to be liberated because they are liberated. The ruled ones are the ones who need liberation, and both the women and the men need this liberation.

I can see why Dolores *is a narrative film, the power of it being a narrative film. Do you think it is also possible to be as emotional and to speak in that way in a documentary?*
I think it is possible. I think that the problem with documentary is that the documentary form has been used more as essay writing in which a person has an opinion and he or she goes out to state that opinion and they use "real footage" in order to do that. From my point of view, there are two languages that people use: there is the language that comes out of the intellect and then there is the language that comes out of emotion. I don't think that one is better or worse, each has its place. I think that the emotional language can be as perceptive, as complex, and can talk about the same subject matter as the intellectual language can. I don't think that one is limited. The major limitation that I find in the intellectual language is the fact that very few people talk it. The population that speaks it, that's fluent in it, is very, very small.

It becomes a small group talking to each other.
Yes, and I think that the bulk of human kind still speaks through the emotions. Now, if you're asking me if it is possible to

create a totally emotional documentary, I think that what is important to ask is to whom do you want to speak? I'm not saying that it's better to talk to one or the other, people have their preferences. I happen to want to talk to this group of people. Is it possible to then use the documentary form, that is, if we look at the documentary form not from the content but simply from the filmic form of it? That is, the ability to go on to the real world, shoot things that are happening, hopefully without affecting those things, although you tend to affect them, but trying to keep it as unaffected as possible, and then to put that footage together in such a way that you're using the emotions to talk.

80 *To move folks, that's the point of it, that you want to move folks.*
I think that we have to be very careful when we say you can have emotions in a film. To have people go through emotions, that's one thing. But you can use emotions to talk, that is, you can use emotions as a language to put across realities, to put across ideas, to put across a whole series of things that we communicate. Whatever can be communicated, you can use emotions to do that. I think that that might be a very difficult thing to do with documentaries because you're going to have a documentary that is really non-linear. If you accept that as a way to go, then it is possible.

It has to have elements of narrative.
Yes. I have seen some documentaries that do that. I met a fellow who followed a Puerto Rican group of homeless people on the Lower East Side and spent months with them, shooting—*un americano* from New York. I saw the documentary that he did on these people. It's almost like a narrative film in that he just let things happen; if these people were going through a fight or if they were sitting there on the ground, just sitting down resting he would just shoot that. He amassed all of this material and used it in a very narrative sort of a way. But I think that in general, the so-called intellectual language tends to talk about facts and statistics.

But you don't need to have that in documentary either.
I think that choices as to why we chose the narrative form in *Dolores* is because I feel that that is the form that our people know. They know it so well that they don't think about it; it's a natural part of their lives. I think that the documentary form is foreign to the average person; and it's not just Puerto Ricans. And it even goes across class. The average person does not know the documentary form, but they know the narrative form; that is one that we have grown up with all our lives. So that from the point of view of the filmmaker, it's easier to use that form to communicate if you want to communicate without any of the obstacles that you would encounter with documentary. ⌝

Insider/Outsider:
Making Films in the Puerto Rican Community

Frances Negrón-Mutaner

What makes a particular community produce work on certain topics and not others (or not use media at all) and what can we do as media professionals to "awaken" communities to the potential of media? In order for me to tackle any of these questions, I would like to start by examining the notion of "community" and then go on to make some concrete connections to my experience as a Puerto Rican filmmaker in Philadelphia. Particularly, I will refer to two pieces I have been involved in which are either about the predominantly working class Puerto Rican community of North Philadelphia (*AIDS in the Barrio*) or emerged from an organization which serves the area (*Pieces of Life*).

Despite the fact that we use the term "community" in a very loose way, it is not an accident that we tend to use the term when we speak of groups of people who have a disempowered relationship to the dominant power structures. Thus, we say the *Black* community, the *Puerto Rican/Latino* community, the *gay* community and the *women*'s community. We never say the *men*'s community, the white community or the middle-class community. We say the "independent community" but only mention Hollywood by its single name. Because the former "communities" are also composed of other "communities" or sectors which have different power relationships within them, the definition falls short of really describing the experience of this multiplicity. Since I feel imprecise using the concept of "community," I will try to be as specific as I can when I refer to my own experience. So, I can only talk of specifics in addressing the question of "who has expressed interest in media production and why?" in the Puerto Rican community of Philadelphia. Whenever I do use the term "community," I am referring to a very abstract notion which refers to a group of people who have both been identified and self identify as "X" because of their relationship to dominant political structures and common—but not homogeneous—ways of coping with those structures.

I should add that when we as media professionals (part of the "power") ask how can we "awaken" ("powerless") communities to the potential of media, we are taking a somewhat paternalistic

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role. I would like to focus more on how media in the Puerto Rican community in Philadelphia has emerged as a possibility in terms of both activism and expression, and how we can learn from our concrete experience to avoid reproducing the power structures we amply criticize in our works and our discourse as independents.

■ *AIDS in the Barrio: Eso no me pasa a mí*

The first example I want to use is the making of *AIDS in the Barrio*. Personally, the making of this film brought many satisfactions and even more contradictions. The film was motivated by a personal experience. Alba Martínez, who later became the co-producer, lost a close relative to AIDS in 1986. At the moment this happened, we were living in the Puerto Rican sector of North Philadelphia and were both active in community politics in different forums. Alba works as a Community Legal Services lawyer and I used to work for a newspaper based in the community. As information about AIDS became more and more accessible, we realized that despite the low numbers of reported Latino AIDS cases in Philadelphia, Puerto Ricans were going to be hit by AIDS in a severe way. Because Alba was frustrated by AIDS organizations' increased bureaucratization, and I believed in the film medium as a form of activism, we decided that through the making of a film we could both channel our need to make a modest contribution regarding the AIDS crisis and develop a tool that would also address other issues—non-medical ones—which, as women, we saw as key. Our initial goal was to produce an "informational" film since wepresumed, as did most media we came across, that the Latino community did not have the needed information for AIDS prevention. This goal was quickly deconstructed when we went out with a video camera and asked people what information they had about AIDS. To our amazement, the people we interviewed did have information about AIDS. What they didn't seem to have was a practice which acted upon the information. Thus, the process of making *AIDS in the Barrio* as it looks today started.

At this point some questions regarding my initial comments concerning "community" come up. Were we, middle-class, U.S.-educated Puerto Rican women, part of the "community"? Just because we had good intentions, and the ability to tap into resources and cross class alliances with the Puerto Rican community, did we have the right to tell people what they should be doing? Were these obstacles in terms of practice only possible to see from a relative distance? How did this film become "community media" even when its origins, were and were not, in the "community"?

But there was the "other side." We wanted to make a film but we didn't know how. We had the field of possibility but we didn't know how to exercise it. I was in film school but was not yet capable of handling a big production and Alba worked full time. It was obvious that we needed to form a team. A Puerto Rican film student from Temple, David Cochran, showed interest in providing the technical skills and Alba and I started writing what we thought was a convincing proposal. Although the proposal was still at the skeleton stage, it was brought to the attention of David Haas, a then MFA in photography at Tyler who also had connections to the funding world, who became the executive producer. For personal reasons, David Cochran left Philadelphia leaving us without the technical skills we needed. We began to look for a replacement. We hired an independent filmmaker, Peter Biella, a white middle-class male, to assemble a crew and serve as co-director. Now our core was complete. We later added a group of community activists and health professionals as consultants to guarantee some feedback from the potential professional users of this film. As of now, the people involved in the major decision-making process of this film had either no previous relationship to the community or had a professional relationship to the community. This last characteristic does not mean that people were necessarily discon-

nected from the community's general problems. It just means that when we wanted to be disconnected, we could, for example, find another job and move.

As the film progressed, and we began to spend long hours in the "community" searching for the subjects of the film, two things happened. On the one hand, I felt that this was a film that was being made about AIDS in the Puerto Rican community and was not a film coming from the community. The filmmakers had a clear agenda of what they/we wanted and basically went out to get it. If, for example, the average opinion of people in the *barrio* was that homosexuality was wrong, we opted for the definitely minority opinion that it is not wrong and we went ahead to prove it. If this was a "community" production, why didn't it reflect the community's sentiments? Thus, the question for me came up: Who is the community? Is it ethically questionable to structure a section on women's subordination with statements made by men who had no idea that we were going to make them look like fools? On the other hand, did this really matter if they were sexists? The politics of power became, then, extremely complicated. Class, gender and sexual orientation had a struggle—and class won. By virtue of the power we had as middle-class artists (even if somewhat limited), we used these working class men's images and voices to make our point.

On the other hand, I felt that because of my relative lack of experience, gender, origin and age, I had to struggle with an all male, predominantly middle-class white crew, to sometimes frustrating levels. In summary, what I discovered was that power was the main issue in making any film: The power to be able to gather the resources to make a film (and later to distribute and effectively exhibit it); the power to convince others, many of whom had nothing to gain from the experience, to participate in the film; the power to make decisions; and the power to talk back to the screen after the film was completed.

Many of my fears about misrepresentation and unequal power relationships regarding the subjects of the film almost evaporated when the film finally was completed and the screenings began. Both in the screenings we did at community centers in the Puerto Rican community and other alternative media centers, we found that the people who "we" wished to represent did feel well represented. Comments from participants, community activists and family members affirmed that our struggle to adequately portray what we saw as the socio-economic and cultural context of the spread of AIDS was successful among these sectors of the community. This didn't mean that everyone who saw the film felt that being gay was correct. However, as I attended screening after screening, I became aware that the film was hardly ever criticized in Philadelphia, but received much more criticism from outside of the city. The difference in response was probably linked to the fact that for Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia, across class and ideological lines, this was the first film in recent memory which through its city wide distribution presented Puerto Ricans with an image of themselves. Even when this image was partial, it broke with the awesome political invisibility of Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia. When a woman who works in the prison system in Pennsylvania commented in one of the screenings that she had shown the film to 300 inmates and that they asked to see the film again and again because it was about "them" (and last but not least two of the 300 were in the film , I understood that in addition to the potential that the film had as an AIDS education tool, it was also, in retrospect, an important step in creating the possibility that the Puerto Rican community of Philadelphia could make images about itself even if the process revealed many more contradictions than were evidenced in a screening. In one of the community events, a teenager asked us why we hadn't included the issue of pregnancy and babies. We answered that despite the fact that that was important, we couldn't address everything. Her answer was revealing: "Then, I'll make it. If these two women who are barely five years older

than I am produce a film, why can't I?"

In summary, what made *AIDS in the Barrio* community media was its reception and use. Because of our arrangement with the city of Philadelphia, all Philadelphia residents had a right to a free copy of the film, and many people went out of their way to get it and pass it on. Could this film had been done any other way and also receive the support it did? To be a community film, did it have to be community based from the moment of its conception to the distribution? If we don't make believe that a work is community media because of its process but is embraced by the community, is that good enough? And here is where the power of talking back is crucial: If the "community" had that power, most of these questions would be irrelevant. Both "insiders" and "outsiders" could produce films "about" any particular community, the only rule being that you have to reveal yourself. Tell us where are you coming from and don't assume you are producing "Film Truth" in capital letters.

■ *Pieces of Life*

After *AIDS in the Barrio*, I received various proposals to do what I consider to be organization community media in a more strict sense: media that comes from a concern of an organization or group who lives and works in the community and under their direction. One of the projects I accepted to help in was recently presented at the organization which produced it, Taller Puertorriqueño. Again, the topic was AIDS. Taller was interested in documenting their AIDS Quilt project, an exhibition which was to travel throughout the city, but particularly in the community. Their first idea was to make a "10 minute thing" to show that they had done the project and to show who had been involved. Taller wanted to shoot it in VHS. They did not know what on line editing was and after knowing were not interested. They had $800.00 to do the project.[1]

Unlike with *AIDS in the Barrio*, I, as a filmmaker had no agenda for the piece. I wanted to say what they wanted to say and, of course, I thought what they had to say was valuable. I was told what to shoot (people associated with the project) and what to ask them. I made a one-hour rough cut with all the material I thought usable but they had all the material and could question and change my decisions. After viewing this, they decided what the half-hour cut was going to look like. In effect, what I did was to translate the organization's concerns as cheaply and efficiently as I could. In the process they learned about videomaking and I learned about working under extreme constraints and being a resource instead of a "professional."

Although we finally did go on line with a grant from the AIDS Activities Coordinating Office, the most important thing about *Pieces of Life* is that it proved that a Latino grassroots organization could produce a media piece with a Latino filmmaker, with a low budget and no grandiose aspirations, for their own use. Because I was not paid and worked very hard on this piece, I felt that this was more my "community responsibility" as a relative outsider than anything else. Personally, I got the satisfaction of completing a document for an organization I respected, knowing that they were going to use it for their own good purpose. I feel the piece is their's and have no doubt that it is.

Today, Taller has a full-time staff person which has, among others, the responsibility of expanding and developing their small film festival. Taller is also planning to do a collaborative film project next year with Latino media workers in the area and Puerto Rican filmmakers from Puerto Rico. Also, and for the first time, they included a video workshop in their summer camp for children where 11 to 13-year-olds were exposed to hi 8 equipment and the process of scripting, acting and critiquing what they do. I have no doubt that this interest, which had been there for some time, flourished because the organization confirmed that making media is possible. Other organizations like the Neighborhood Film Project and Scribe Video Center (which are not housed in the community) have helped in bringing resources to community-based organizations where Latinos

are represented to enable these groups to use media. This brief description of how organizations are involved in media production is to point out the following: to make a "community" media active you need an active media community to support it. And for the first time in the Puerto Rican art and activist community, media is becoming a priority.

As an image/sound maker, the combination of these two experiences has made my work go in a different direction. The two audio works that I completed later and the film I'm working on now, attempt to provide a mosaic of voices where my intentionality and presence is made evident from the start when I attempt to speak about the Puerto Rican community. On the other hand, I still work on community-based projects where I serve as facilitator of the project, and not as filmmaker. In *Brincando el charco,* the crew also includes a Puerto Rican apprentice. Because I am a middle-class, Island-born Puerto Rican, I can't help bringing my biases and my politics to the table. In this sense, I am encouraging community organizations to count on me for skills but not necessarily for direction. I'm willing to work with community organizations if they direct me, not the other way around. Despite the fact that I am dividing my work between "personal" and "community" (which is not the happiest solution), I believe this way to be the most comfortable. As a relatively privileged group, independent filmmakers must be aware of what our contradictions and limitations are and how we articulate our agendas with the communities we intend to develop alliances with. Although there is not a single way to go about this, there are at least two important guiding questions: How much are we contributing to the process of empowerment? And, how much are we contributing to reaching the abstraction of community media, even at our own expense? The possibilities are many. ❐

ENDNOTE

1. On line editing refers to the process of mastering a video work, usually to a higher format through a time base corrector. The process also generally includes the laying down of titles and the leveling of the sound and color quality of the piece. This higher format master is then used to make copies.

SIDA en El Barrio: Eso no me pasa a mí es un documental de 28 minutos producido con el esfuerzo colectivo de cineastas, organizaciones comunitarias y la comunidad de artistas latinos de Filadelfia. En el contexto de un creciente número de gente con SIDA en las comunidades latinas, la película se refiere a los aspectos cultural, social y económico de la epidemia de SIDA en la comunidad latina del norte de Filadelfia. Estos elementos incluyen la persistencia de actitudes homofóbicas y sexistas hacia las mujeres y la sexualidad así como la complejidad y contradicciones de la economía de la droga en las comunidades pobres. En momentos en que la falta de recursos gubernamentales y las condiciones socio-económicas hacen difícil llegar a los latinos y organizarlos, es crucial la necesidad no solo de proveer información acerca del SIDA sino de generar una respuesta comunitaria a la vez crítica y política. Sin un entendimiento de la epidemia en un contexto más amplio, las comunidades pobres con pocos recursos será incapaz de demandar apoyo por parte de las organizaciones gubernamentales o usar sus propios recursos para transformar actitudes profundamente arraigadas y comportamientos que se han vuelto aún más peligrosos frente al SIDA. Esta película intenta jugar un papel en este esfuerzo comunitario.

La película fue producida por Alba Martínez y Frances Negrón; Productor Ejecutivo, David Haas; Dirigida por Peter Biella y Frances Negrón.

La financiación ha sido generosamente proveída por el Fondo Comunitario Bread y Roses, la ciudad de Filadelfia, el Fondo George Gest de la Fundacion Filadelfia, el Fondo Paul Robeson, así como fundaciónes y donantes privados.

La película está disponible en español VHS (versión narrada) y en inglés con subtítulos en VHS y 16mm. Para información acerca de la película, llamar en Nueva York a Cinema Guild, (212) 246-5522 o al Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, (212) 772-4197.

AIDS in the Barrio: Eso no me pasa a mí is a 28 minute documentary, collectively produced by filmmakers, community organizations and latino artists in Philadelphia. The film focuses on the growing incidence of AIDS within the cultural, social and economic context of the latino community of North Philadelphia; including homophobia, sexist attitudes towards women and sexuality, as well as the complexities and contradictions of the drug economy in a poor community. At a time in which government funds and socio-economic conditions make it difficult to reach and organize latinos, it is crucial not only to provide information on AIDS but also to generate a critical and political community response. Without understanding the AIDS epidemic in a broader context, communities with less resources will be unable to demand support from government agencies or to use their own resources to change high risk attitudes and behaviors that become more dangerous in light of AIDS. The goal of *AIDS in the Barrio* is to play a role in this community effort.

AIDS in the Barrio was produced by Alba Martínez and Frances Negrón; Executive Producer, David Haas; Directed by Peter Biella and Frances Negrón.

Funding was generously provided by the Community Fund of Bread and Roses; the City of Philadelphia; the Paul Robeson Fund; and private foundations and donors.

The film is available with Spanish narration in VHS and in English (sub-titled) in VHS and 16mm. For more information call Cinema Guild in New York, (212) 246-5522 or the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College (212) 772-4197.

La Quinceanera of Chicana Counter Aesthetics

Rosa Linda Fregoso

You may wonder why, in an age when we are all eagerly awaiting the next Chicano feature-length film released by Hollywood, or when Chicanos have finally managed to penetrate the mainstream industry with such hits as *La Bamba* and the *Milagro Beanfield War*, laying the groundwork for the much anticipated and "*ya era hora*" adaptation of Rodolfo Anaya's *Bless Me Ultima*, in a joint venture by Luis Valdez and Moctezuma Esparza, I would spend your time and my energy discussing short-films by Chicanas. Why I would even propose that there is significance to a Chicana aesthetics. After all, in a phallocentric society, power is measured by big-ness (as in feature-length films), and penetration (as into the Hollywood industry). These are crucial markers or signs of success, of maturity, of coming...into fruition, that is. There is little evidence among Chicana filmmakers of bigness, penetration, or of coming into the mainstream, on dominant culture's terms.

The continual exclusion or marginalization of Chicanas from film festivals like the recent one at UCLA, and from the canon of Chicano film criticism, like the Keller anthology (1985), is a complex issue, a product of many factors, including but not limited to sexism. Other factors include the power which comes from making feature films. In a society where feature-length films signify mastery over cinematic practices, a feature-length film symbolizes power, which then translates into more prestige and greater critical and scholarly attention. Another factor for the omission of Chicanas from the "canon" of cinema can be attributed to limited funding, but also to their exclusion from the "good-ol'-*niño* network" which shuts out women. However, it needs to be stated that the Chicana preference is also a self-conscious one. It derives from the concern among Chicana film practitioners with the artistic properties of film, that is to say, their greater interest in the craft of cinema. And, obviously, aesthetic innovations in the art-form are far more manageable in the shorter forms.

About the differences between Chicano and Chicana writers, Rosaura Sánchez has said that "what distinguishes Chicana writers is their relative invisibility"...yet they have nevertheless managed to create "aesthetically superior work" to that of their male counterparts (1985:61–62). Similarly, I will argue that Chicana film practices represent the most resonant development in Chicano cinema. My brief intervention is part of a larger project on Chicana film practices where I examine in greater detail the import of Chicanas to the consolidation of the genre of Chicano cinema (Fregoso). In this article, I will highlight tendencies in Chicana films which are both thematic and aesthetic, that is the innovations made by Chicanas in terms of both content and form. As a political ges-

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ture, I have chosen to discuss three films made by Chicanas during the height of Chicano movement cinema, the pre-Hollywood era. These films are *Chicana!* (1979) by Sylvia Morales, *Después del Terremoto* (1978) by Lourdes Portillo and *Agueda Martínez* (1977) by Esperanza Vásquez—films which warrant a much deserved attention. For, aside from token and patronizing gestures of inclusion in film festivals, or paternalistic mention in anthologies of Chicano cinema, these three films have never received critical scholarly examination. I will close by pointing to recent trends in Chicana filmmaking as is evident in the work of Frances Salomé España. In this retrospective analysis that spans 15 years, in celebration of what Lourdes Portillo calls, the *Quinceanera* of Chicana filmmakers, I would like to pay tribute to a Chicana counter-aesthetics.

I say counter-aesthetics because Chicana filmmakers have had to counter two kinds of aesthetics: the dominant culture's which has distorted the Chicana subject, and the aesthetics of Chicano males that "render them nameless and voiceless" (Quintana 1990:262), and in the case of film, imageless, namely, as images that serve as backdrops for male history. Chicana filmmakers have had to challenge what Moraga and Anzaldúa call "the many-headed demon of oppression" (1983:195).

The works I have chosen represent woman as the central subject of their narratives. We must however distinguish first of all between works that are feminist and those that are woman-centered narratives. Rosaura Sánchez notes that what distinguishes a feminist analysis in scholarly work is that its focus on "the condition and experience of women provide[s] a critical feminist account of gender inequality" (1990:17). And while we sometimes unfairly require from creative works like a film, such a monumental task, both *Chicana!* and *Después del Terremoto* are created in that spirit. Both films re-present a Chicana feminist counter-aesthetics.

■ *Chicana Films*

The first historical film on Chicanas, Sylvia Morales' *Chicana!*—with an exclamation mark—counters both the dominant culture and Chicano exclusion of the role of Chicanas in history. We could perhaps read *Chicana!* as the female counterpart to the first Chicano film, *I Am Joaquin*, made in 1969. Both *I Am Joaquin* and *Chicana!* are epic accounts of Chicano history; *...Martínez* from a man's perspective; *Chicana!*, from a woman's. Both have the tendency to tell all of our history in one filmic statement—500 years in roughly 20 minutes of film. Both films reproduce the various themes of Chicano cultural nationalism, namely they challenge racism, provide historical accounts of domination (conquest) and struggle. Both celebrate the indigenous legacy of our people. In terms of form, both *I Am Joaquin* and *Chicana!* make extensive use of stills, the murals of Siqueiros, Rivera and Orozco, photographs, and music.

Despite these similarities there are important differences as well, and not just in terms of theme or related to the fact that *I Am Joaquin* tells the story of our male heroes and *Chicana!* of our female heroines. There are major formal/aesthetic and ideological differences as well, for, *Chicana!* critiques all forms of domination.

Whereas male-centered cultural nationalism was critical of "*gabacho*" society and the "*gachupín*" colonialists and landowners, they idealized pre-Columbian society. *I Am Joaquin's* epic-account of conquest and domination was based on an idyllic depiction of pre-Columbian society. *Chicana!*'s woman-centered epic account refuses to idealize the Aztecs and offers instead a critical re-vision of our lineage. Unlike male cultural nationalists, *Chicana!* depicts the enslavement of women and men under Aztec domination and the film's "re-vision" of Malintzín Tenepal (La Malinche) is represented in the context of feminists' critiques of Chicano movement ideology (Alarcón 1983).

Formally, *Chicana!* draws from an intertextual tradition which combines and juxtaposes distinct artistic practices into a new form. *Chicana!* is a collage of dramatic re-enactment, photographic stills, reportage and documentary conventions. To the slide-show and text of Ana Nieto-Gómez, Sylvia Morales adds her expertise in television documentary and reportage. And she also brings to the film a keen sense of irony and satire, as is evident in the opening segment of the film. The first sequence

renders a dramatic re-enactment set in contemporary time, which subverts common-sense assumptions about Chicana passivity and subservience. Aesthetically and ideologically, Sylvia Morales is the first Chicana filmmaker to confront the "many-headed demon of oppression" on such a grand scale.

Lourdes Portillo's *Después del Terremoto* would predate *Chicana!*, yet, in a similar vein, Portillo's film exemplifies a Chicana feminist counter-aesthetics. Portillo herself has been one of our most misunderstood and distorted film practitioners. Male critics simply don't know what to make of her. She has been called a Nicaraguan filmmaker by Gary Keller in his introduction to the only Chicano cinema anthology (1985). Assuming that only a man could conceive of an activist film association, Keller also forgot to mention that Portillo was one of the founders of "*Cine..Acción.*"

Yet, she herself has added to the confusion for she has made a film about a Nicaraguan immigrant in San Francisco, another film on the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina (*Las Madres*, 1986), and yet another on the Day of the Dead (*La Ofrenda*, 1989), which dares to give a subject-role to gays in their efforts to revive and transform *el día de los muertos* celebration in San Francisco. Of course, all these seemingly different ways of re-presenting reality onto film are only confusing and perplexing to those who assume that there is only one way of being a Chicana, that there is only one voice that can speak for all Chicanas, or that there is only one concern that interests Chicanas, in sum, to those who assume that there is an "essential" Chicana subject. Indeed, the ambiguity in Portillo's work, that refusal to be categorized, the multidimensionality of her subject matter, her concern for many and varied forms of oppression, be that of military repression in Argentina or the oppression based on gender and sexuality, is what in fact makes Lourdes Portillo very Chicana. Not to mention the fact that Portillo herself claims that very identity. We should recall that what characterizes the work of many Chicana artists, writers and filmmakers, is their rejection of singular notions of cultural identity, that is to say, their preference for what Alarcón calls "multiple-voiced subjectivity" (1990a:336).

Después del Terremoto's theme may be about the life of a Nicaraguan immigrant woman in San Francisco, but its concerns are ours as well. And, a great deal of the film's sub-text is also about the experiences (cultural, political and sexual) which affect Chicanas within a dominant culture. In fact, by depicting these conflicts from the perspective of a non-Chicana, Portillo achieves an "objective" distance from the subjectivity of Chicana identity, an objective distance which provides the film its clarity of vision. In so doing, that is to say, by stepping outside of our culture, the film is transformed into one of the most powerful critiques to date of culture and gender conflict within our own community. In a longer article I argue that this film can be read as an allegory for Chicanas' internal cultural and gender oppression.

Después del Terremoto is about a Nicaraguan working as a maid in San Francisco. The plot is propelled by an impending meeting between the film's protagonist, Irene, and her boyfriend, who has just arrived from Nicaragua where he has been a political activist, imprisoned and tortured in Somoza's jails. Yet apart from this specificity which localizes the theme as Nicaraguan, or the film as a story about Nicaraguans in the U.S., the film's various subtexts can be read allegorically. And it is the manner is which the film is formally structured which opens up its allegorical dimensions.

The film's narrative is orchestrated around two major events, Irene's purchase of a television set and the event of the *cumpleaños* which serves as a pretext for unveiling women's rituals. The film opens with the purchase of the TV and closes with an ensuing conflict between Irene and the boyfriend about the act. The television purchase is important for the effectivity with which the filmmaker uses the TV as a sign with multiple layers of meaning. On the one hand, it is a signifier for cultural imperialism, the dissemination of U.S. programming to the Third World. But, the TV is also, in the U.S., a signifier of acculturation for it is designed not only to homogenize different audiences and organize them as markets, but also to acculturate immigrants into U.S. culture.

The television also marks success, or it can be read as a symbol of the culture of consumption. The ability to purchase a television for many lower income people, particularly immigrants, registers their successful incorporation into U.S. culture, as consumers.

Yet, despite these multiple registers that the film interweaves, the dominant reading of the television revolves around its function as a signifier for the content of a woman's independence and autonomy. From the perspective of Irene, her decision to purchase the television symbolizes her autonomy as a wage-earner and her independence as a woman. And it is from the act of her purchase of this commodity that Irene entertains the question of her role as either a future (dependent) wife or an independent (perhaps single) wage-earner.

Another significant feature of the film's structure is located in the contrast between two sequences, filmed back-to-back: the sequences which depict Irene and her friend in the bedroom, discussing gender-relations and politics while engaged in the ritual of "dressing-up," and the sequence with the two *tias*, involved in a kitchen ritual of making *tamales* while also similarly talking about gender-relations and politics. The contrast between these two sequences is rich with generational conflict and differences. Both register the multiplicity of women's discourse, for example, repression through religion, but also bonding through ritual. The complexity and multiplicity of Chicana identity is captured in the following detail. On the one hand, *las tias solteronas* (spinsters) voice the most traditional values about their desire for a husband for Irene by saying "*no se vaya a quedar a vestir santos*" ("let's hope she doesn't end up dressing-up saints"). Yet in a second breath one remarks, "*más vale vestir santos que borrachos*" ("it's better to dress saints than drunks"). Throughout, the film is rendered in a sophisticated deconstructive and reconstructive style. From a Chicana feminist perspective it critiques those cultural values which imprison Chicanas while it also salvages those which liberate. Moreover, while strongly leaning toward cinematic realism, the film's formal refusal to tie-up the threads that make up a fictional text, that is, to achieve narrative closure, opting instead for the ending with the subtitle, "and so it began," leaves an opening, a critical space for the viewer to weave his or her ending to this ongoing struggle of gender politics.

A woman-centered counter-aesthetics is exemplified by Esperanza Vásquez' *Agueda Martínez*. Also predating *Chicana!*, *Agueda Martínez*' significance rests in its role as a counter to most male-produced documentaries which focus on grandeur, on the important men and sometimes women in Chicano history. Agueda represents the life of the common everyday woman whose life experience and struggle are just as heroic as those of the "exceptional" individuals. Like *Chicana!*, *Agueda Martínez* challenges dominant assumption about Chicanas as passive and subservient, for the film is an elegant portrait of a self-sufficient woman. She owns her *rancho*, makes her living by working her land which produces various crops, weaves in the winter, has raised eight children, and proudly claims 77 grandchildren and 45 great-grandchildren. Agueda lucidly instructs viewers on her various crafts, home-cooking, child-rearing, as well as on her views about Chicano culture, history and tradition.

The formal properties of the film mark *Agueda Martínez* as one of the most eloquently crafted films of the period. As opposed to the narrative style of didactic, authoritative voice-over prevalent in documentaries, Agueda resorts to direct dialogue. The protagonist speaks directly without "objective" mediation. Moreover, the film's discourse is constructed in a subjective mode, patterning a subject's stream of consciousness. The central subject of the film slips in and out of the narratives of work, cultural tradition, history, interpretive, critical and self-reflexive commentary.

Structurally, the film reproduces the movement of the day, beginning with sunrise and ending with the setting sun. This visual orchestration overlays onto another marker of time, the cycle of the seasons. Indeed the film is represented in a cyclical fashion, opening with spring-time (Agueda's craft of harvesting) and closing with

the winter (Agueda's craft of weaving).

While its beautiful depiction of an exemplary elderly woman may strike some as romantic and idealized, Esperanza Vásquez' portrayal of struggle in a woman's daily-life existence, represents instead a counter-aesthetics and a counter-discourse to what Quintana terms "predominantly masculine interpretations of history and culture" (1990:258).

Among Chicana filmmakers discussed in this article, none take full advantage of the artistic potentiality inherent in the art-form of cinema than Frances Salomé España does so in her short films. The film, *Anima*, (1989) a tribute to *el día de los muertos*, exemplifies a new experimental style in Chicana filmmaking. España's work draws attention to the representational aspect of cinema, for the film subverts both cinematic time and space.

In *Anima*, the filmmaker ritualizes the artistic-form through the prolongation of cinematic time as is evident in her extensive recourse to unusual angles and shots, as well as her introduction of dissonance to shots and angles. The film alternates between three sequence spaces: the cemetary, images of women with painted faces, characteristic of the Day of the Dead, and a negative shot of the cemetary in freeze-frame. The alternating movement, back and forth to each sequence, is rendered through time-distorted cinematic techniques. For instance, through jagged or abrupt pans of the cemetary or images of women with painted faces shot through reflection in chrome mylar. The effect of these distortions cannot be dismissed as simple gimnickry, or film tricks. For España effectively captures, aesthetically, the ritual-based practices which in fact define the Day of the Dead.

Her experimental style is itself a ritual that draws attention to itself. *Anima* is a ritualized rendition of a ritual, and is therefore thoroughly carnivalesque. In a playful artistic style, España re-creates a ritualized representation (form) of a representation of a ritual (content) of women's painted faces for another ritual, *el día de los muertos*. *Anima* stands out for its infinite representational levels, including the rendering of stylized images of women inserted within another ritual, sitting around the kitchen table. And, the film's complexity rests in the filmmaker's skillful ability to create a film language that resonates and reproduces the very content of the ritual—a quality which opens up a new phase in Chicana cinematic practices, a movement beyond the politics of contestation.

Like the work of a new generation of Chicana filmmakers such as Sandra P. Hahn, Beverly Sánchez Padilla, Olivia Chumacero, Betty Maldonado, and T. Osa Hidalgo de la Riva, Salomé España's work charts a new direction for Chicana filmmaking, cinema made in the spirit of a "politics of representation." But like her predecessors, Sylvia Morales, Lourdes Portillo and Esperanza Vásquez, she too must confront the "many-headed demon of oppression." For the forces which exclude Chicanas from the "Halls of Chicano cinema" (or the Halls of Moctezuma) and those that oppress Chicanas in a racist, sexist, class-society, are still haunting us today, 15 years later. ❐

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■ *Les Présences* (The Baseball Team) by Jack DeLano, 1941

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Images and Contradictions
DIVEDCO's Portrayal of Puerto Rican Life

Antonio Lauria-Perricelli

A somewhat different version of this essay first appeared in Films With A Purpose,[1] *the catalogue of an exhibit of films and posters produced by the División de Educación de la Comunidad (DIVEDCO), an agency of the Puerto Rican government. During the initial and major phase of its existence, DIVEDCO sought to develop adult literacy together with the skills of "democratic participation" and community self-help in Puerto Rico's rural neighborhoods. The agency's methodology combined discussion groups, community meetings and organizing techniques with thematically-coordinated sets of films (using actors from the rural communities themselves, as well as professionals); and wall newspapers, silk-screened posters, and illustrated booklets designed and reproduced in its own workshops. Treatments in the films ranged from the didactic-informative, through the use of dramatically-conflicted protagonists, to the occasional comic or even satirical approach tinged with surrealism. The themes were impressively varied: the importance of community and popular self-reliance, self-assertion; informed democratically-organized cooperative effort and collective problem solving; health and sanitary education; tolerance of difference and even of dissent; family conflicts and the rights and problems of women and young people; and typifications of Puerto Rican folklore, culture, economic history and identity.*

DIVEDCO mobilized large contingents of rural people and employed a large number of contemporaneous Puerto Rican artists, writers and social scientists. Many members of this professional staff were independentistas *who saw considerable merit in this relatively Left-wing effort of the reformist PPD government of the early 1950s.*

This essay complements Kino Garcia's discussion of DIVEDCO's cinema in "Puerto Rico: hacia un cine nacional," published in the last issue of CENTRO.

The Division of Community Education's films, booklets, posters and wall newspapers are the residue of Puerto Rican social history in the 1940–65 period. In their images and themes we can find the expression of many contradictory processes conditioning Puerto Rican life and culture at that time. The films are wonderful documents that capture in rich detail the minutae of everyday rural life; films in which an audience of *jíbaros* ("countrypeople") could easily recognize themselves and their surroundings, and could perhaps take a step towards another form of self recognition, towards a different mode of consciousness of self and society. As a legacy, for a later generation, these films continue to be a means towards self-recognition, as

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graphic and compelling exemplifications of many styles of Puerto Rican behavior, of speech and movement, of personality and character, and of the web of problems confronted on an everyday basis by people of different social circumstances. As such, they complement the historiography, ethnography, sociology and literature of those years.

These films represent the women, men, girls, boys of a rural world of small farmers, peasant smallholders, sharecroppers, landless agricultural laborers, fisherfolk; of a much smaller group of large landholders, shopkeepers, creditor-merchants and other middlemen, schoolteachers and other government agents. These people, and the social relations which contradictorily bind them together in their local neighborhoods, are depicted faithfully, as are many of the problematic aspects of these relations: the gossip and mistrust, the indirection and misdirection of discourse, the greed, manipulation, opportunism, exploitation, political bossism. Furthermore, in their catalogues of interpersonal behavior, of traditional modes of cooperation in house-building and labor-exchange, these films celebrate what continue to be classic strengths of the Puerto Rican popular classes: solidarity between kin, neighbors and fellow-workers; resourcefulness and a singular sense of humor and irony; sharing and hospitality; a shrewdness of analysis of human motives which at times assumes an excess of mistrust. These are qualities that still sustain a people living in adverse circumstances in Puerto Rico and in the cities of the Diaspora.

The verisimilitude of these representations is thus patent. So is their didactic and rhetorical intention: they attempt to transform that which they represent. At the same time, this masterfully depicted rural world was rapidly slipping away, was being radically transformed by forces which, like the activity of the Division of Community Education itself, were molded and mediated by the policies of the Puerto Rican government. Yet these films do very little to capture or represent these profound transformations which were occurring all over the island. For instance, we do not see the new forms of labor, the new relations of production, the factories, the daughters and wives of these rural families who labored in them. Although the impact of the Korean War is noted, the massive migration to the U.S. mainland appears only obliquely. And some forms of group action are celebrated while others again appear only rarely. Yet the audience, even in the most remote barrios, even those whose routine of daily life and production continued undisturbed, were aware of these changes.

These representations do more than freeze this rural world: they have something of a backward-looking quality. Furthermore, in the very fixing of these representations and in their celebration of the virtues of the *jíbaro*, as in the treatment of those elements of the transformation that are directly addressed, such as the increasing pressures towards consumer acquisitiveness, or the negative representation of imported musical forms, there may be something stronger than simple nostalgia. The world of the image is a world under threat; the threat itself, going unrepresented, is subjected to a kind of denial. One can detect a certain pessimistic concern: this rural world contains the essence of *puertorriqueñidad* (Puerto Rican-ness), and the forms of social change place this essence in peril of an irreversible destruction. Yet we are also shown a possible utopia on the screen: the vision of a better life through local participatory democracy and initiative, literate awareness and citizenship, self-help, and infrastructure development.

This utopian vision was embedded in another utopian project, which justified the general policy of economic and social development in this period. Just as the social transformation resulting from these policies goes unrepresented in the films, so does the concept underlying these policies. This developmentalist utopia was based on the notion that Puerto Rico could "modernize" itself, offset the underdevelopment and poverty inherited from

previous colonial conditions, while creating optimum conditions for cultivating the unique Puerto Rican identity. Luis Muñoz Marín, who as Governor of Puerto Rico played a principal role in creating both Operation Bootstrap and the DIVEDCO program, eloquently expressed the utopian projections of both programs in many of his speeches during the early 1950s, wherein both Puerto Rican "culture" and economic development where major concerns.

In this theory, economic growth, employment and personal income could best be achieved through "Operation Bootstrap," which promoted export-led industrial development fueled by direct investment by U.S. private enterprise which was attracted by high profit margins through tax exemption, subsidies, and low-wage policies. In this vision, the 1952 Constitution had ended colonialism in Puerto Rico, the island was now "freely associated" with the U.S. Through this association the full flowering of Puerto Rican culture could be achieved: techniques of economic development, public administration and political democracy could be borrowed from the U.S.; meanwhile, Puerto Rican values would continue to flourish. The negative social consequences of industrialization could be avoided through wise governmental policies, welfare-state programs, and education. Thus, a civilization rooted in Puerto Rican values could be constructed, emphasizing modest living, sharing and human fulfillment, eschewing social injustice and excessive consumption. Puerto Rico might even surpass the civilization of its northern associate; "Operation Serenity" would complement "Operation Bootstrap."

This reformist vision informed the creation of the Community Education Division. In the films, as we have noted, the root-essence of puertorriqueñidad is identified with a traditional rural culture. This same identification was made both by the optimistic assessment of Bootstrap, and by the pessimistic view which criticized Bootstrap as destroying Puerto Rican culture and Americanizing Puerto Ricans. Both versions assumed the same thing, and in effect denied to Puerto Rican working people a capacity to struggle with their everyday circumstances and create ever-new meanings and forms of identity out of older forms of solidarity. Paradoxically, this also negated the very possibility of democratic dynamism in everyday life which the various utopian visions sought to promote.

In practice, the DIVEDCO utopia was frequently contradicted by the Bootstrap utopia. There were contradictions between some of DIVEDCO's objectives themselves, as well as the greater tensions between DIVEDCO's philosophy and the trends given greatest weight by government policy. The local community was mobilized to resolve some of its problems, and was even stimulated to struggle against leadership based on local landed and mercantile economic power. But this effort remained localized, while outside the declining agrarian world the industrialization program created new forms and centers of power with ever more pervasive effects on Puerto Rican lifeways. Rural people, like most other Puerto Ricans, had no control over these new powerholders, and the community education program did not address this problem. While DIVEDCO affirmed basic human, gender, civil, social and economic rights in texts which still retain their usefulness, the pattern of emphasis given to such themes was clearly influenced by short-range policy considerations. For instance, during the first years of Operation Bootstrap, a no-strike, no union policy for the new factories prevailed. This policy began to change towards the mid-1950s as organized labor in the U.S.A. pressured the insular government; only then did a DIVEDCO pamphlet on the rights of labor appear.

The self-help construction programs economized government resources by directly mobilizing people's labor. While increasing rural living levels, this also freed scarce fiscal resources for a budget emphasizing subsidies to US investors in Puerto Rico. The consumer education effort sought to influence choice-making and affirm modest, non-acquisitive

lifestyles. The films also promoted cooperativism: producer cooperatives to maintain local production among small farmers and fishermen; buyer's cooperatives to cheapen consumer costs and increase choice. But the general economic development program had a very different effect: it promoted Puerto Rico's role as a market for U.S. exports, facilitating the growth of production and the continuity of profits in the U.S. No effective program of agricultural development was initiated in the Bootstrap heyday; agricultural employment declined, food production in Puerto Rico continued to atrophy. Consumer, not producer cooperatives, characterized the cooperative movement. And Puerto Rico
96 acquired one of the world's highest indices of per-capita consumer debt. DIVEDCO also had a contradictory relation to the population displacements of the period. Hoping to reduce rural emigration to both San Juan and the U.S. mainland, it could only do so by increasing services and facilities, not by diversifying production and employment. And the program's attempt to educate people for migration to the U.S. was short-lived and ineffectual.

DIVEDCO's means of representing and influencing Puerto Rican life quickly gained wide recognition, in many fora, including UNESCO publications on basic education, international film festivals, art-galleries, and symposia on community organization. It also became part of what critical voices called "Operation Showcase," whereby Puerto Rico's development program became an international showpiece: an exemplar of peaceful collaboration between peoples at different poles of "development," of an enlightened, liberalized capitalism, a non-communist path to social progress. The Island served as a training and demonstration station for U.S. foreign aid and development programs. DIVEDCO's images were employed in selling Puerto Rico to also other publics. Potential U.S. investors, rum-drinkers, and tourists, were respectively the targets of advertising campaigns whose full-color representations frequently appropriated the activities of the social and cultural development programs: images of Community Education meetings, of the University of Puerto Rico's itinerant theater troupe, of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña's museums.

Ultimately, the imbricated, contradictory utopian visions expressed in these films or in the Bootstrap program are tragic, failed projects. While DIVEDCO made solid contributions to economic and social development, it is clear that it was fighting against the main thrust of government policy which was allied with forces largely indifferent to the concerns of the community education program. Certainly, by the 1970s, the inability of the Puerto Rican model of colonial capitalist development to continue generating new jobs, reduce unemployment and sustain continual increases in real income became painfully evident, as did the spectra of the South Bronx and an unceasing migration. Even Luis Muñoz Marín himself, in the later years of his retirement, expressed deep concern and worry over the effects of his labors on the quality of Puerto Rican life. But despite all this, the qualities of these films endure, not the least being the belief in the possibility of Puerto Rican fulfillment, and the images of the vitality of a people who are capable of taking hold of their conditions and transforming themselves. ❐

ENDNOTES

1. *Films With A Purpose*. New York: Exit Art/Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1987.

MI GENTE

Malín Falú

Actualmente se desempeña como productora y mantenedora del programa "Hablando con Malín", que se transmite por RADIO WADO (1280 AM), en Nueva York, de lunes a viernes, de 10 a.m. a 12 del mediodía. Anteriormente estuvo realizando tareas similares en esta misma emisora y en RADIO JIT. En el transcurso del presente año, marzo 1991, fue galardonada con dos premios; uno como la "Locutora del Año" ofrecido por la Asociación de Cronistas del Espectáculo (ACE) y el otro como "Mejor Voz Latina de Radio en Nueva York" ofrecido por los "Premios Paoli", con sede en Puerto Rico.

Su destacada labor en la radio, su compenetración con el público radioescucha y los incidentes envueltos en su incursión en los medios de comunicación sirven para reflexionar sobre el impacto e importancia de este medio para nuestra comunidad. La entrevista estuvo a cargo de Amílcar Tirado Avilés y Blanca Vázquez, y tuvo lugar en noviembre 1990, en las oficinas del Centro. La tarea de editar la misma fue responsabilidad de Amílcar Tirado Avilés.

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¿Malín, nos puedes hablar un poco sobre el desarrollo de la radio hispana y su función en la comunidad?
La radio hispana se puede decir que comenzó como dicen, pasito a pasito. Hace como unos treinta años o cuarenta, más o menos, empezaron lo que se diría "horas de programación". O sea, no se puede decir como en otros sitios que vimos el establecimiento de estaciones de radio, que tenemos una programación, por ejemplo, de doce horas, de diez horas y que fueron establecidas para la comunidad hispana. Eran estaciones con programación en inglés que comenzaron a dejar espacio al mercado hispano, de tal vez cinco horas.

De lo que he recogido entre las personas que he hablado, cuando el Teatro Puerto Rico estaba en su apogeo, que venían todos esos grandes artistas, había una relevancia de la radio mayor que ahora porque la televisión prácticamente desembancó a la radio, pues se oían programas en vivo. Y lo que la radio daba, más que nada en esos momentos era música. Yo me imagino que era establecer la presencia, porque aquí en Nueva York, a diferencia a otros países y me refiero más a Puerto Rico porque es mi país de origen, cuando tú estás en un medioambiente ajeno, extraño, todo lo que te recuerde tu punto de origen, tiene un gran significado para ti. Tú sabes, te sientes identificado. Yo me imagino que ese fue el origen de todo esto, de establecer una presencia, establecer una comunicación entre unas personas que ya reconocían que la radio era un medio que para ellos tenía vigencia, importancia.

Quiere decir que nuestra música en eso ha tenido una proyección bastante importante. Así es que lo que era la música y lo que era la situación de algunos individuos de ver que ya la comunidad hispana tenía un poder de compra, de adquisición, pues hizo que algunas personas dijeran "espérate que allí hay un mercado". El contenido pues variaba, como en todo lo que es medio de comunicación tiene su desarrollo, su crecimiento, su momento culminante y luego van cayendo hasta que desaparecen. Se desarrollaron voces muy conocidas. Y nuestra comunidad, no sé si la anglo funciona de la misma forma, pero nuestra comunidad es muy inclinada a identificarse con la gente. O sea, reconocen una voz de un Miguel Angel Torres, que es una voz que tiene cuarenta años en los medios de comunicación, veinticinco aquí en Nueva York en las noticias (empezó en Puerto Rico). Reconocen un Díaz Tirado, una voz que también lleva más de veinticinco años en la radio aquí. Yo tuve un compañero llamado Rafael Font que fue otro pionero, verdad, en la radio.

El teatro aquí antes era muy activo; el Teatro Puerto Rico, el teatro de Brooklyn, el Commodore. Otros que han cerrado, por ejemplo, donde mataron a Malcom X (el Audobon), ese era como un salón de baile, ¿no? Lo que era el baile y el teatro, las funciones en vivo, parece que iba vis-a-vis con parte de lo que se desarrollaba en la radio. ¿Te das cuenta? La música para la gente escucharla tenía que oírla en la radio porque, imagínate, música que tú no oyes, tú no la reconoces. Por lo tanto, allí había una conexión. Hubo un programa que hizo Juan Rodríguez Díaz que se llamaba "El debate musical" y el debate musical lo hacía en vivo. Iba al teatro, entonces iba el público. Yo creo que para la época del '50 y el '60, el teatro y el cine era parte de la vivencia. Porque yo me acuerdo, mi primer esposo se crió aquí en el Barrio y me dice que para su mamá era sagrado todos los domingos llevarlo al cine. Y en Puerto Rico también mi hermana me cuenta que ellas iban al cine, ese era el entretenimiento; inclusive yo de pequeña también iba al cine, ese era el regalo, el gusto que tú te dabas, verdad. Mi prima, que llegó aquí en el '46, me cuenta que vió a "Tin Tán," Cantinflas, Libertad Lamarque, y Felipe Rodríguez en el Teatro Puerto Rico. Así es que la gente, yo creo que veían a la radio como la extensión de los que ellos veían en el teatro. ¡La presencia! , tú sabes. No creo que había el concepto que vemos ahora del servicio público porque no habían servicios públicos para el hispano. El hispano, yo tengo que decir, ¡Dios mío! ¿como sobrevivía?

WADO empezó con una hora o dos, se fue extendiendo poco a poco, hasta que se ubicaron, siendo todavía dueños compañías americanas. Porque ese fenómeno de que un puertorriqueño comprara una estación de radio se vino a ver a fines de los '70 y el '80. En los '80 fueron los años para que los hispanos, tal vez ese concepto de que los '80 iba a ser la década de los hispanos, a alguien se le metió eso por dentro y dijo, " bueno, esto va a ser mío". Pero lo que es '60 y '70 fue prácticamente propiedad de americanos que vieron el potencial del mercado hispano, donde la música era prácticamente lo que se proyectaba. No había programas de *talk*, ni nada por el estilo, porque yo creo que ni en la radio americana, eso del "*talk*", de "hablar", era muy conocido. Por ejemplo, la tendencia que hubo en la radio, porque en Puerto Rico la hubo como el reflejo de la tendencia en los Estados Unidos, era lo que llamaban el "*Top Forty*" donde te daban el "*Hit Parade*". Prácticamente ese era el concepto en la radio, la música que más se oía.

Se dice que es por el gusto del público, pero a veces, ¿quién determina exactamente cual es el gusto del público? Antes había mas libertad para los "*DJs*", para la gente que ponía música. Por ejemplo, tú tenías tu turno de cuatro horas y ahí tú ponías lo que a ti te diera la gana. Así venía el próximo y lo hacía. Después hubo un movimiento donde se hicieron unas investigaciones y se encontró que había varias gente que cogían un dinero por debajo de la mesa entonces eran los programadores los que oficialmente tenían el permiso para programar lo que se iba poner en la estación. Los programadores vinieron a tener todo el poder ya después de los '70.

Cuando yo llegué hace 15 años ya se daban las entrevistas de radio, las de artistas más que nada. Había un horario que se llamaba, "Puertas Abiertas y Micrófonos Abiertos", que lo hacía Rafael Font por las tardes. Posiblemente, pensaba la gente que dirigía la estación, eso es lo que más la gente quiere oír, a sus artistas. Y había mucho movimiento de artistas que vivían aquí en Nueva York. Había como una economía que permitía que el artista viviera y aunque podría trabajar en otras cosas, pero que hubiera bailes, y las orquestas se nutrían de la música que se oía en la radio, porque así es que se hace una orquesta famosa, cuando la gente la oye, "vamos a bailar con tal orquesta".

Habían dos estaciones de radio aquí; por muchísimos años hubo dos nada más. Empezó WHOM, después WADO y esas dos se quedaron por espacio de casi veinte años. Viene en el 1982–83 por ahí, más o menos, y estos señores, los Alarcón, que es un señor cubano con su hijo, y por una suerte, compran una estación que se llama Super KQ. Y logran a través de—porque son gente hábil, inteligente para los negocios—y compran una FM. De momento empezamos a ver que hay unos hispanos, WADO la compró un puertorriqueño, Nelson Lavergne. Los Alarcón compran como seis ó siete estaciones, ellos tienen una en Chicago, una en Los Angeles, una en Miami; hay problemas económicos, pero problemas económicos tiene Trump. Los programas de la mañana, siempre fueron de tipo "jacarandoso". No había ese concepto de noticias como hay ahora. Entonces, 1010 WINS vino con todo noticia. Aquí yo no creo que nunca se ha considerado hacer una estación hispana 24 horas de noticias. Pero se dieron cuenta que el hispano, a través de unas encuestas que se hicieron, reconocía que las noticias era importante. Entonces vinieron los Alarcón, pensando en traer algo diferente, para impactar, ¿no? pues dijeron, vamos a poner dos horas de noticias por la mañana. Y eso fue un éxito. Los ubicó. Los puso en el mapa aunque después siguieron con la música y con todo lo que se usa en la radio en general.

¿Cuál era el contenido de estas noticias y el público al que se dirigía?

Bueno, el contenido era básicamente en la inmigración de otros grupos a esta cuidad, pues, les hizo ver a ellos que si tenían una persona que diera las noticias directamente desde Santo Domingo iba ser impactante, verdad. Que una persona diera las noticias directamente de Puerto Rico, también. Hasta el '60, vamos a

decir, lo que había prácticamente eran puertorriqueños, verdad. La revolución cubana empieza la inmigración de los cubanos, que fue en el '60 en adelante. Y después viene la dominicana, cuando matan a Trujillo. El área metropolitana para la radio es New Jersey, New York y Connecticut. New Jersey cuando yo llegué en el '75 estaba llena de guatemaltecos, de salvadoreños, de diferentes grupos. Queens de colombianos, peruanos, argentinos, mejicanos. O sea que ya entonces la gente dice, espérate, a esta gente tenemos que ver como los ubicamos, los hacemos oyentes potenciales trayéndole algo de sus países.

Y tú ves, por ejemplo, WADO, antes de yo irme, que empezó a tener corresponsales en otros países. Y un corresponsal que por teléfono te da unas noticias de un minuto de Perú pone a todos los peruanos a oirte la radio. O sea, tú ves la conexión entre lo económico y el contenido y a quién le estamos dirigiendo nuestra programación. Si tenemos que atraer la comunidad colombiana pues hay que darle algo colombiano. Esos grupos son muy nacionalistas, entonces, aunque viven en Nueva York, y comparten unas cosas parecidas, pero si tú le das algo de su país los tienes. En WADO, por ejemplo, se creó "Canto a Las Américas", un programa que lleva más de veinte años. La programación la va moldeando lo que está pasando en la comunidad, pero en términos musicales nada más, porque en términos políticos el conservadurismo es tremendo. No se podía tocar la política.

¿Cómo bregan con problemas de la comunidad?
Bueno, había un conservadurismo. Mientras, y te hablo por mi propia experiencia anterior en WADO, ahora hay unos nuevos dueños y hay otra mentalidad, pero en un tiempo atrás, había una política de conservadurismo total. No se podía mencionar, por ejemplo, el nombre de Pedro Albizu Campos. ¡Muchacha! te podían botar por eso; o nombres que evocaran cosas que fueran de movimientos políticos profundos. No creo que yo esté diciendo nada que nadie sepa. Todo el mundo sabe que es verdad. Había un conservadurismo, eran americanos los dueños, la idea era verlo como un negocio más porque una estación de radio es un negocio. ¿Te das cuenta? Y es lo que mucha gente no acaba de entender. Y la tragedia es que siendo un negocio, pero aún así, están usando las ondas del aire que son públicas.

¿Por qué tu crees Malín que la radio sigue siendo el medio de comunicación más importante si uno quiere llegar a la gente?
Bueno, por la misma naturaleza de la radio. Por ejemplo, es en la forma que se hace porque en todo hay como una estructura. El periódico no puede salir a menos que no sea la hora que ya está planificado para salir. Televisión igual. Pero la radio, si hay una bomba, si ese edificio se cae, yo cojo el teléfono, me ponen al aire y ahí mismito doy la noticia. Tiene una inmediatez que no tiene ni la televisión ni el periódico.

Yo creo que la radio aquí en Nueva York ha crecido y ha cumplido más que otros medios, una vigencia de mantener a la comundiad informada. De que tú me preguntes la calidad de la información, es debatible, pero en términos de informar, ha cumplido un cometido, definitivamente. Ha habido espacio para crecer en términos de ofrecer programas de enriquecimiento cultural.

Para mi la radio ha cumplido una faceta increíble. Yo estuve trece años en programas de madrugada y programas donde se hablaba de todo. Yo siempre creí en que uno tiene que entretener pero también educar e informar. Así es que tú haces una mezcla. Eso son tres cosas básicas que la radio siempre tiene que tener presente: educación, información y entretenimiento.

Yo tiendo a tratar de enterarme de todo lo que está pasando. Y en base a lo que está pasando pues yo sigo un *trend*, porque si aquí hay un problema vital con los inmigrantes, con la gente que no tienen documentos, pues yo sé que eso es un tema que le interesa a la gente, tienes que mezclarte porque es una necesidad, un problema. Para tú enterarte de las cosas tienes que hablar con la gente, tienes que mezclarte. Tú no

puedes estar yo en mi casa y con mi marido y entonces voy a mi trabajo y no se lo que está pasando. Yo viajo en tren, yo voy, yo he ido a sitios en el Bronx que la gente no se atrevería entrar. Tú tienes que estar en la comunidad. Si no, tú vas a estar desconectada de la comunidad.

¿Nos puedes hablar sobre tu vida personal y de tus inicios en la radio?
Yo vengo de una familia de nueve hermanos. Yo soy la menor. En mi casa siempre hubo un concepto que mi papá decía, "ustedes estudien comercio en la escuela superior porque si no pueden ir a la Universidad por lo menos pueden trabajar. Y todas mis hermanas, todas estudiamos comercio en la High School, en la Escuela Superior.

Soy de Santurce, pero, nos mudamos para Country Club; eso fue cuando los americanos empezaron a hacer urbanizaciones y ya empezó la gente a salirse de los pueblos e irse a los suburbios, a las urbanizaciones. Bueno, entonces, estudié en la Universidad. Y me inclinaba siempre a la cuestión cultural. Me gradué de la Universidad y empecé a trabajar. Un día una amiga me dice: "Malín, vamos a hacer un grupo de folklore". Yo dije: "¡ay sí!, a mí me gusta todo eso". Y fuimos a la primera reunión, y no apareció nadie, excepto mi amiga y yo. Y ella me dijo: "Malín, vamos a hacer una agencia de modelos negros". Yo dije: ¡ay! pues mira, que interesante"; pues en mi casa mi papá había sido muy orgulloso de ser negro. En el '46 él fundó en Puerto Rico lo que es el NAACP aquí, una organización para el adelanto de los negros, y las personas de color en Puerto Rico. Eso no tuvo mucho éxito porque eso de hablar de negros en Puerto Rico eso era una cosa extraña. Y como "negro" se usaba para insultar a alguien, pues no se podía ver en otro contexto que no fuera de insulto. Y entonces le pusimos el nombre de "Azabache" a la organización; fuimos a todos los modistos a que nos dieran ropa para modelarla y salir en las revistas. Bueno, todos nos daban la ropa porque tal vez nos encontraban tan atrevidas. Estas dos negras que iban a donde Fernando Pena, a Martin, al otro, a Mojena que dijeron: "Vamos a ver hasta a donde ellas llegan".

Y entonces conocí a una gente que trajeron el programa "Soul Train" para Puerto Rico. El de Don Cornelius y todos estos artistas negros de acá. Entonces salió en el periódico que estaban buscando una modelo negra. Y yo dije: "Pues ésta soy yo". En el interín, alguien me dijo: "Tienes que participar en el concurso Miss Puerto Rico". Y yo dije: "¡Ay, Dios mío!, yo no me voy a poner con eso". Y en mi casa me decían: "Malín, eso es para gente blanca, ¿cómo tú te vas a poner en eso?" y mi amiga: "No, Malín, hay que participar porque ahí es que tenemos que estar presentes". Entonces mi familia, que "no" porque ellos tenían miedo a mi frustración, porque sabían que todo eso era para otro ambiente. Pero como yo estaba en las de luchar por bregar con todo ese concepto y dije: "Pues voy a participar". Bueno, entonces, una amiga mía de un periódico me mandó a los periodistas. Entonces, yo salía en todos los periódicos. No sé si era porque era un concepto nuevo o por lo que sea, la cuestión es que seguimos bregando con eso y se fue haciendo muy popular la organización de "Azabache". La verdad que el nombre "Azabache" es la piedra negra que te da suerte. Y me dijeron: "Allí hay este programa donde se necesita una *host*, con otra muchacha más y ellas van a ser las que van a presentar el programa y hablar de ciertas cosas y entrevistar artistas y para integrarlas con el programa de allá". Y hablando en inglés y todo eso, ¡en Puerto Rico!, yo digo pero mira que cosa. Y aquí ahora hablo español. Y no quiero hablar inglés. Pero allí en una semana me dí a conocer en Puerto Rico.

¿En qué año fue eso?
En el '73. Después, había mucha política con la persona con que yo estaba trabajando. El marido era productor, la quería lanzar como cantante, y pues, yo no estaba en ese ambiente donde la gente está alcagüeteando al jefe porque ese es el que te va beneficiar. Yo como que pensaba que no tenía que alcagüetear a nadie. Yo trabajaba en ASPIRA en Puerto Rico, que es una organización que está por otros conceptos. Los

compañeros están trabajando por el mismo objetivo. ¡Ay Dios mío! Yo veía esas políticas tan sucias de ese medio ambiente de la radio y la televisión, y yo decía: "Yo no puedo estar en eso, esto no es lo mío". Y un día me salí. Tú sabes, no pude más con toda esa presión. Ahora es diferente porque ya uno se va curtiendo como dicen en el campo, pero cuando uno está nuevecito te traquetean porque te hacen trampas. Lo que pasa es que a veces hacían trampas que eran tan obvias que se notaba que ellos eran unos sinvergüencitas. Pero esos son gajes del oficio, como dicen. Ahora yo lo hubiera manejado, bregado de otra forma también. Me casé con un muchacho productor de aquí de televisión y me vine para acá. En el '75 llegué aquí, y fui a Trenton, New Jersey, a trabajar en el Congreso Boricua de New Jersey. Allí trabajé por un año y medio y hacía unos programas en español para la New Jersey Public Television.

¿Producías, o era host?
Productora asistente de Vegetable Soup. El programa de niños de televisión que era un programa nacional y aprendí mucho de televisión y producción. Era un programa que se veía en toda PBS *station* y el canal 4. Cuando trabajaba en el Congreso Boricua había venido a WADO a varias entrevistas de servicio público. Y el director de programación me conoció. En ese interín, en Trenton, tomé un curso en locución, en una escuela allá de Alan and Singer Broadcasting School, en radio. Y en la Universidad, cuando entré en televisión, cogí cursos de dicción y me fui preparando. Un día me llaman de WADO, que si podía empezar al otro día, da la casualidad que ya yo estaba terminando mi contrato en Vegetable Soup. Yo dije: "Bueno, si no lo cojo ahora, las oportunidades vienen una sola vez". Pues empecé al otro día. Iba medio día a WADO y medio día al otro trabajo porque terminaba en ese mismo mes en enero. Estuve quince días en eso y después en WADO en el '78 entré hasta el '85, que me fui para Radio JIT y estuve hasta el '90 en Radio JIT y cerró la estación, y a los tres meses empecé en WADO. Así es que desde el '78 estoy en el aire aquí.

¿Cómo te ha afectado la cuestión de la raza en el desarrollo de tu carrera?
Tuve una experiencia con una compañía que enlata productos de comida que cuando yo llegué a WADO querían venirme a conocer para hacer un comercial. Cuando vieron que yo era negra, me dejaron un mensaje por teléfono, al otro día, con la secretaria que me olvidara de todo. Hay gente que han creído que yo soy rubia, de ojos azules.

Pero como yo nunca he sentido complejo de ser negra o de ser blanca; pues yo tampoco no estoy diciendo: "Yo soy la negra de Santurce", como hacía Ruth Fernández [la "Negra de Ponce"], pues es obvio que eres negra. Así es ¿por qué decirlo? ¿Entiende? Yo nunca he estado en eso de que soy negra. Cuando a la hora hay que decir "soy negra", pues soy negra. El otro día Elizabeth Holtzman nos dió un homenaje y entonces yo finalizo y digo, "Me siento muy orgullosa de ser puertorriqueña, mujer, y negra" porque yo tengo tres minorías prácticamente. Tal vez, pienso yo, tengo mucha salud mental en terminos de quien soy yo y como yo me crié. ❐

Latino Journal

Santiago Nieves

During the great migration of the 1940s and 50s, thousands of Puerto Ricans came to the U.S. from towns like Aguadilla, Ponce, Lares, Río Piedras, Orocovis and Jayuya. But Puerto Ricans share a common experience with the many that have come before us and those that are yet to come, and that is that we all came here in search of work and a better life.

The main landing point for Puerto Ricans from the Island was New York City. Slowly Puerto Ricans began to make the U.S. their home. *Bodegas* sprung up selling *ñame*, *platanos*, *yuca*, dried *bacalao*, and much of the produce that we enjoyed back home. Newspapers and magazines were written in Spanish. There were Spanish-language radio and television programs too.

Puerto Ricans also learned about racial prejudice here. There was racism in Puerto Rico, but the color of a person's skin was not so important to a people who could be multi-racial—in one family! We felt hurt and confused by the racial lines that were drawn in the U.S., and many suffered for it.

We found jobs in mostly large cities. Puerto Ricans washed dishes, scrubbed floors, parked cars, worked as laborers, dug ditches or worked long, hard hours in factories. The pay was miserable, and the working conditions worse, but for many it was more than they got back on the Island.

For us, the U.S. "mainland" was a strange world. In Puerto Rico it was warm all year long. Here, the winters were bitter and cruel. But cold or warm, the U.S. could also be an unfriendly and foreign place. Puerto Ricans knew little or no English. Shopping in most stores was a problem. Traveling on buses or subways was hard too. Most Americans did not understand Spanish. And like many that came before us, language was a barrier which added to a sense of loneliness and isolation, uprooted as we were from our homeland. But something was needed to ease the pain of isolation.

■ *Enter Spanish-Language Radio*

Spanish-language television (VHF only) had virtually no programming intended for Latino consumption. Spanish-language radio, however, became an integral part of the Latino experience. Early radio had some news and public affairs programming, but mostly it was a light mix of music and comedy shows, *novelas* and lots of hawking-type commercials. This format has been the staple of Spanish-language radio to this day (but more about that later).

But it was about more than just Spanish-language programming. Radio brought the Puerto Rican/Latino com-

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munity some of what we had left behind on the Island. Radio reflected our hopes, our language and culture, something that was ours, and it helped to break the cycle of isolation and loneliness so many of us felt. Now there existed a continual link between Puerto Rico and here, and the world.

By the late 1940s AM radio stations like WHOM and WADO had on-air personalities that became virtual members of our extended families: Personalities such as Juan Rodríguez Díaz (Mr. *Debate Musical*), Freddie Baez, Rafael Díaz Gutierrez, Polito Vega, and many more (many are still around). Music was still "pre-Salsa" then, and very *típica* ranging from *jíbaro* love songs to *bombas* and *plenas*. The top singers of the time included Felipe Rodríguez, Bobby Capo, the continental sounds of Olga Guillot, and La Lupe; trios like Los Panchos and, of course, the greats like Machito and Noro Morales. And there was lots of comedy like the disarming Myrta Silva and the clowning of Los Tres Patines and Vitola. Overwhelmingly, throughout the 1940s and 50s, Spanish-language radio (and other media) targeted programming to the majority of their listeners at the time—Puerto Ricans.

■ *Radio for the Growing Generation of English-Speaking Latinos*

From the late 1950s through the 1960s, English-language radio started programming aimed at the growing generations of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos in New York who were by now bicultural and bilingual. More than any other group, Puerto Ricans have related both politically and culturally to African Americans. A great deal of programming at this time was aimed at both markets, and this was reflected in this heyday of "Latin Jazz" radio. (The man most often credited for coining the phrase, Mario Bauzá, says that the music is really "Afro-Cuban Jazz.")

I remember DJs such as Symphony Sid and later Joe Gaines, and also Dick Ricardo Sugar. Collectively, these DJs brought us a treasure of Puerto Rican, Cuban and African American music that could not be compared. When you heard King Haarem's "Moody Blues," you knew you were in for a night of the greats like pioneer Horace Silver, the sensual and sophisticated George Shearing, cool and lucid Cal Tjader, hot and hip Joe Cuba, Puente, Celia and many more. It was on these programs that Puerto Ricans were first introduced to artists like Nina Simone, John Coltrane, the Be-Bop greats like Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, and the innovative and dynamic Betty Carter. Man, those were the days! And all before FM!

In the 1970s and the beginnings of the 1980s, English-language radio appeared with WRVR-FM, which gave us a much more polished, but not as exciting Jazz-Afro-Cuban-Latin mix. I remember the very popular "Sunday Salsa Show" that premiered with former Young Lord Felipe Luciano as host, and later Roger Dawson. In my book, no one came close to Felipe and his always articulate, often eloquent manner. He treated the music and artists with great respect.

Unfortunately, the fate of WRVR-FM was sealed. One late night in 1985 I fell asleep to WRVR's jazz and at eight in the morning the next day, the station was gone. In its place was Country Western music! Slam! Bam! Without

■ Photo: Ricky Flores

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warning! For seven years commercial radio was void of any really good ongoing Latin Jazz programming. WBGO-FM, WBAI-FM and other smaller public radio stations had brought some Latin music to listeners. There was Max Salazar, Nancy Rodríguez and others. In 1980 WBAI (99.5 FM) premiered Nando Alvarrici and Mickey Meléndez' music program, *Con Sabor Latino* (Sundays 1 pm-5:30 pm).

■ *Radio Today*

Today the Puerto Rican/Latino community has grown, and with it so have the difficult issues facing our community. Many more Puerto Ricans are bilingual and bicultural. They are more savvy and many more are professional, yet it is the working poor and poor in our community that need addressing. One Spanish-language station, WJIT (1480 AM) did address the need for more and better analysis and discussion of the issues by doing something Spanish-language radio had not attempted up to now. WJIT changed its programming by adopting English-language radio's all talk formats. For the first time Spanish-language listeners could participate in discussion and they did through call-in programs. WJIT provided a much needed forum for our community. This format was revolutionary for Spanish radio. Up to then, Spanish radio did spotty news coverage and the emphasis was mostly on music and entertainment.

Sadly, On April 27th, 1990, Radio America, the management of WJIT, suddenly and without warning pulled the plug on their Spanish-language programming, leaving us with only four Spanish-language stations that reach the Latino community (WADO, 1280 AM; WSKA, 98 FM—the new guy on the block; WSDQ, 620 AM; and WKDM, 1380 AM).

Listeners were shocked and felt betrayed as they tried getting WJIT and got heavy metal instead. This is particularly tragic because WJIT was the first to break the mold of the sometimes mindless *novelas* and incessantly cutesy programming of the other stations, and attempted to do in-depth discussions of the key issues facing our community today, and to that extent was the only Spanish-language station of its kind. I was weaned on WJIT and the old WHOM, and for 30 years it was an important voice in the Latino community.

WJIT's management said the conversion of the stations was a question of dollars and cents but Manuel de Dios Unanue, one of the station's most popular on-air personalities, angrily disagreed:

> "...[I]t's not profits...I think really that they think we Hispanics must be idiots! They must think that we don't know what the hell we're doing, and frankly I think that's where they committed their gravest mistake. We are going to demonstrate that no one is going to manipulate us. Now the Latino community will be relegated to other stations who focus on music and astrology and absolutely no programming where one could find a discussion, a forum on the hard issues that affect our community.
>
> "The next level is to start to put together a group of Hispanic businessmen and merchants, above all, from the Hispanic community, to begin to buy and therefore control our own stations. I'm not talking about some outside messiah coming to rescue us. We Hispanics can do it ourselves. We must defend what is ours!"

Most recently *Daily News* columnist Miguel Pérez circulated a memo from the hometown newspaper that instructed Pérez not to cover so much of the Puerto Rican community. What happened to WRVR, WJIT, what is happening to Miguel Pérez is clearly a pattern, and a great deal of the motivation behind it is deliberate and pernicious.

It is clear that in order to provide ongoing Spanish- or English-language programming on television, the press, or radio, we need to control those institutions that affect us. However, we can't have control without ownership. We need our own shows, our own media that

covers our issues in a non-pandering, aggressive and analytical manner. Unfortunately, existing programming is mostly fluff and weak public affairs stuff. Few commercial Spanish-language stations, now with the demise of WJIT, even cover tough issues. Future prospects seem bleak, but I have news for you. It has come to my attention that a new Spanish-language radio station will be premiering this year! Word has it that the station will be diligent in much of its news programming. So this is one, we'll have to wait and see.

For English-speaking bilingual Latinos, there's even better news: we already have a weekly news and public affairs magazine program. *Latino Journal* airs on Sundays at 5:30 pm on WBAI-FM (99.5), immediately following *Sabor Latino*. After waiting too many years for someone else to produce the kind of program I thought our community needed, I decided to do it myself. The show reflects our bicultural experience, and covers the hard issues. We have done programming on the AIDS crisis in the Latino community; the case of Prof. Rivera García; Latino Stereotypes in the Media; and ongoing updates on the proposed plebiscite in Puerto Rico, among others. *Latino Journal* has produced four specials this year alone. Most recently "Who's Fighting This War Anyway?" a four-hour program, focused on the disproportionately high number of Latinos, African Americans, and poor and working class people on the front lines in the Persian Gulf. And now, *Latino Journal* features commentary from various Latinos, including columnist Awilda Palau, from *El Diario*.

Latino Journal is, however, only one voice. We need more Latino faces and voices in the electronic media. The Puerto Rican/Latino community, locally, regionally and nationally could use more good hard-hitting programming that can serve as a link not only between Puerto Ricans in the U.S. and on the Island, but also to link Latinos around the U.S. and the world!

Right now, the *Journal*'s promotional budget has not allowed us to do more promotion for show, but our listener-sponsored base is growing by leaps and bounds. And it's only listener-sponsored public radio WBAI that allows me to take risks and to do what you might not be able to do in commercial radio.

Oh yes, and if you go to work or are up early on Thursdays, then tune in to *The Thursday Morning Show*. This is a new live, weekly early morning (6 am-9:30 am) radio magazine aimed at a broad audience. We have live guests, hard news, information, listener call-ins, and of course, some of the best jazz and Latin around. A recent program focused on the L.A. Police Department beating of an African American, as well as a live performance of Repertorio Español's new production of "Botánica."

So listen in! I'll be looking for you, and...*¡P'ALANTE!* ❐

Micro-Computers as Research Tools and Community Resources

Richard Chabran

International capitalist production of every kind...is reaching out to remake consciousness in its own images, and scoring many successes. No policy of mere defensive exclusion can stand against this. Only the positive recovery, development and exploratory use of new forms and technologies by actual societies for their own diverse purposes can make new socialist societies.

Raymond Williams, 1989, p. 311[1]

The restructuring of global, regional and local economies is generally acknowledged in social sciences if not always in humanistic studies. Indeed there are many efforts aimed at describing the effects of this phenomena at both the structural level and everyday life practices. One of our present contradictions is that so many Latinos in academia have failed to acknowledge their role as information workers. Many of us have made the critical error of separating ideas from labor. The effects of this refusal are multiple. Here I would like to explore the impact of the computer on the still embryonic efforts to build alternatives means and forms of communication.

While information has played a critical role in creating a new information order to service and facilitate global restructuring, it has also produced some new alternatives. A prime example is the personal computer. In the early 1970s, I remember using FAMULUS, a personal documentation system, to create various bibliographic lists. This program required a mainframe computer. This in turn required a computer account, which in those days were not very accessible to Latino undergraduates. Information development and access was very centralized. Software programs were limited and academic computing was regulated in ways which limited our ability to develop alternatives. This quickly changed with the introduction of personal computers. An important side effect was that information became decentralized. Personal computers were introduced in a way which required local development. Generic products were introduced and developed out of the interaction between users and developers. This was, of course, always an uneven process, with business interests dominating. Nonetheless, Third World people began to use these new tools for "subversive" purposes, which were aimed at further decentralizing the dominant information order. Unfortunately, these were often local or at best regional efforts and were

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hardly ever sustained, further adding to uneven development. In part this occurred because the focus was on particular applications rather than on a more generalized vision. Williams (1974) has noted that:

"It is especially a characteristic of the communication systems that all were foreseen—not in utopian but in technical ways—before the crucial components of the developed systems had been discovered and refined."

In another essay, Williams (1989) notes the necessity of viewing technology not only as technological advances but also how these are embedded in social relations. I would like to argue that we need to give much more thought to how micro-computers can serve as tools within Latino society. That is, in what ways might they assist? What problems can they help us solve? Addressing these questions requires a more generalized vision, one that must be able to move beyond old limitations; one that does not fall prey to technological determinism. It is that more generalized vision which we must explore.

Micro-computers are common place in today's universities. Not only are micro-computers becoming common in faculty offices but micro-computer labs (sometimes called pods) are available in many universities and colleges. Software to use in these micro-computer labs are also readily available. Still micro-computers tend to be generally under-utilized. There has been inadequate attention to how to integrate software applications. Below I will suggest possible integration of various functions common in higher education. The particular products mentioned are illustrative only and are not meant as an endorsement.

■ *From Typewriter to Word Processor*

While chronologically, statistical applications preceded other computing uses in Latino efforts, these were generally mainframe based. The first generalized use in Latino research was word processing. Today typewriters are only generally used to fill out forms. There is a variety of different word processing programs including Microsoft Word, Wordperfect and Nota Bene.

Most scholars immediately recognized the powerful uses of word processing. At first, they would simply have a secretary input text that was already composed. Next, they experimented with revising text. Today most scholars compose text on word processors. It should be noted that this has dramatically affected the division of labor within departments. While some scholars have access to secretaries, the bulk of scholars are required to input their own texts. This alteration in the division of labor has been received positively in some circles and negatively in others. My own experience is that scholars revise their own handwritten text while they are inputting it into the computer. This will undoubtedly have negative effects for the historical record since revisions will often be impossible to trace.

Pedagogically, word processors have demonstrated their usefulness in writing programs. They are appearing at various educational levels from primary to higher education. In adult programs, dedicated to the *Freierian* methods, they are used by adults with little orthographic skills to compose their life experiences, using free writing and brainstorming techniques. Their composed texts are later utilized to build language skills as well as the basis for developing critical consciousness. One such literacy program is the *El Barrio* Popular Education Program which is sponsored by the *Center for Puerto Rican Studies* at Hunter College, City University of New York.

One problem with word processing is that it inhibits the writer from seeing the total product. For this reason software which feature outliners are becoming popular. These outliners provide the tools for the writer to develop a structure for a paper, essay etc. You can use your word processor to write sections and periodically consult your outline to make sure you have not strayed off of your writing plan. Some word processors such as Word and Word Perfect include outliners.

Another writing utility which has been developed is the electronic editor. Electronic editors check files developed on word processors for readability, word choice, passive voice, and sentence structure. One popular electronic editor is Rightwriter. Grammar programs are being successfully used in community colleges. Other software programs have been developed as note taking systems. For example, when you or someone edits your paper they either write notes in the margin or use a "postits." Smartnotes is a program which allows you to accomplish the same task with a microcomputer by overlaying notes over a word processing file.

■ *Bibliographic Research*

The next large computing function to impact Latino scholarship was in the area of bibliographic development and use. This can be categorized as 1) the use of existing electronic bibliographic services which contain information on Latinos, 2) the development of alternative Latino automated bibliographic products, 3) the development of individual automated bibliographic products, and 4) a desire to access all of the above. Instead of historically discussing the emergence of these bibliographic products, I will describe the usefulness of these tools in the scholarly process, while critically assessing their usefulness in a general Latino strategy.

◗ *On-line Bibliographic Searching*

Historically, the holdings of libraries were described in either book catalogs or library catalogs. Printed bibliographies and indexes added documentation for students and scholars on the existence of selected areas of interest. Today on-line databases make a wealth of information available to students, scholars, private industry and the general public. Below we will explore both how one accesses these sources and describe those electronic sources of major interest on Latinos.

Computer-assisted searching is the searching of bibliographic data bases utilizing computers. These data bases are compilations of citations stored on magnetic tapes or disks. There are literally thousands of data bases on a wide range of topics. They include references to books, articles, dissertations, documents and reports. Many, but not all, data bases have printed counterparts.

◗ *Getting Connected*

Data bases are accessed through direct (on-line) local or remote connections (telecommunications, which may be thousands of miles away) and information retrieval systems such as DIALOG, ORBIT and BRS. These information retrieval systems allow you to search data bases. In order to connect with a data base from a remote location you need a micro-computer with a serial port, a modem, a telephone line, and a communication program. A modem is a physical device which allows you to link your computer to telephone lines and use communication software to access a computer at a remote location. Communication programs allow you to adjust various settings (e.g. baud rate, parity, duplex) so that the two computers can "talk" to each others. These settings will be provided to you when you set up accounts with the data bases producers or vendors. In addition, these programs also allow you to save the telephone numbers and other protocols unique to these host computers so that you can get connected to a given computer with just one keystroke. They also allow you to save the information you generated while linked to the host computer on your own disk. This process is called down-loading. PROCOMM is a popular communication program.

◗ *Library Catalogs*

Many libraries have now either converted their card catalogs to on-line systems or are in the process of doing so. Below are examples of on-line catalogs which reflect the holdings of strong Latino collections. These are available for searching after one exhausts more local efforts.

ORION (UCLA); GLADIS (Berkeley); MELVYL (University of California System); SOCRATES (Stan-

ford); UTCAT (University of Texas Austin), CARL (Arizona State University, Tempe); LIBROS (University of New Mexico).

◗ *Commercial Databases*

After you have searched all available local and free data bases you may still need to search a commercial data base. If you are considering having a computer-assisted search of a commercial data base carried out for you, you must go to the reference desk at your library and complete a computer request form. A reference librarian will interview you concerning the topic of your research. The average charge for a search is about $35.00.

◗ *Bibliographic CD-ROMS*

The latest technology for making data bases accessible to a wider audience is CD-ROM. Two CD-ROMS, for example, can hold all of the machine reliable records of the Library of Congress. This technology is the same as the one that is available for music compact disks. A major advantage of CD-ROM is that library users generally do not have to pay for the search, and yet, get the same information that would be available on an on-line commercial data base. A disadvantage of this technology is that the disks are expensive to develop, there is a time delay, and they usually require the use of one machine per disk. This is now changing with the introduction of local area networks (discussed below), CD-ROM servers, and CD-ROM software such as OPTI-NET, which make these disks available throughout a network. The following listing of data bases is a sample of CD-ROM products which have information on Latinos.

Psychlit (Psychology Abstracts); Magazine Index Plus; National Magazine Index Social Science Index; ERIC (Educational Resource Information Center) on Compact Disc; Modern Language International Bibliography; DAI (Dissertation International) On-line.

It should however be noted that these sources rarely include alternative publications. For these, users are directed to the Chicano Database on CD-ROM which is described below.

◗ *Full Text CD-ROMS*

There is beginning to appear some CD-ROMS which have the full text of printed products such as the Electronic Encyclopedia and Microsoft Bookshelf. Microsoft Bookshelf was meant to bring together major writers reference tools. It includes Bartlett's Quotations, The Chicago Manual of Style, a zip code directory, dictionary, thesaurus, almanac, and business information.

■ *Selected Latino Data Bases*

Since the mid-1970s there have been efforts to develop Latinos data bases. Some of these, such as, the Spanish Language Data Base were closely modeled to the dominant databases. Others focused on a particular field such as the Hispanic Health and Mental Health Data Base, the Chicano Urban Data Base and the Hispanic Data Directory. These efforts were primarily mainframe based. There were more broad efforts such as the Chicano Database. In this effort customized software and subject access to fit Latino needs were developed.

◗ *Chicano Database*

Established in 1976 at the Chicano Studies Library at the University of California, Berkeley, this is the only bibliographic data base whose scope is the totality of the Chicano experience. While focusing on the Chicano experience, this data base includes a substantial number of citations on other Latino groups. The 50,000+ citations in the data base are journal articles, chapters from books, and books. This data base is used to generate several bibliographic products including the Chicano Periodical Index, The Chicano Index, Arte Chicano, and the Chicano Anthology Index. This data base is now available on CD-ROM through the Chicano Studies Library. Individuals interested in purchasing this CD-ROM can call (415) 642-3859.

- *Chicano Studies Research Library Database (CSRL)*

This file contains the citations to monographs, documents, and dissertations held by the Chicano Studies Research Library. It is a private file on ORION, UCLA's Information System. People interested in accessing this file can call the Office of Academic Computing at UCLA (213) 825-7548.

- *Stanford Center for Chicano Research files*

The Stanford Center for Chicano Research has developed three databases for Chicano research. The Hispanic Health Data Base contains abstracted reference on Hispanic health and mental health. The Chicano Urban Data Base contains citations for literature on Chicano urban history. The contents of this data base were published in *Mexican Americans in Urban Society: A Bibliography*. The final file, the Latino Data Directory, contains detailed descriptions of numeric data files. These data bases are available through the Stanford Data Center for those who have an account.

Generic bibliographic software discussed below is being used to inventory several Latino special collections. Arizona State University library is inventorying regional and newspaper collections on Chicanos. The Hispanic Research Center at that same university is developing an inventory of Latino material culture in Arizona. The University of California, Santa Barbara's Colección Tloque Nahuaque is inventorying its Chicano art and theater collections. Finally, UCLA's Chicano Studies Research Center is inventorying several of its special collections as well as developing a national inventory of Mexican American literary archives.

- *Bibliographic Documentation*

With ever increasing access to bibliographic data, scholars needed software to manage their own bibliographic files. Today bibliographic programs are available for the development and use of individual or specialized bibliographies or data bases. These programs assist the user to organize the information collected during the bibliographic research process. Unlike word processing programs, bibliographic programs are data base management systems. That is, these programs store and manipulate discrete units of data rather than storing information into one large file. The more sophisticated bibliographic programs provide templates which prompt the user for various units of information required for data entry. Pro-cite, one such program, provides a variety of templates for books, articles and dissertations.

Entries are immediately stored alphabetically by author. This program provides editing functions so that you can make changes to entries already entered. It also allows you to browse through the data base or perform simple boolean searching. Pro-cite is menu driven which means that instead of memorizing a series of commands you select various option available on the screen. You can control various output options within Pro-cite. For example you can control page length, width and choose whether you want your citations numbered. You can display what items within an entry will be printed. You can also direct your output to a printer, a computer disk file or to the computer screen. Entries can be formatted to a variety of styles such as the following: the Modern Language Association, the American Psychological Association, the Chicago Manual, American National Institute Standard, and others. You can also create your own styles. A companion program, Biblio-Link allows you to merge entries you saved during an online search in a program like PROCOMM directly into your Pro-cite data base. While this saves a great deal of time it usually requires that entries be edited.

Another powerful capability is its ability to search through word processing files for footnote markings and create either bibliographic notes or bibliographies (Paredes, 1979). All of the entries must naturally be in your Pro-cite bibliography. Pro-cite is available in both IBM and MacIntosh versions. Another popular bibliographic

program is Notebook.

Bibliographic programs assist users to become more systematic in the documentation of bibliographic data. They also provide areas for extensive note taking. These capabilities make them critical tools in the research process.

■ *Quantitative Research*

Quantitative research has been a popular method for studying Latinos. One of the better known studies which employed this method is the Mexican American Study project which resulted in *The Mexican American People* by Leo Grebler, Joan Moore and Ralph Guzman. Another important study which utilized this method was the Chicano Identity Project conducted by Carlos Humberto Arce. This kind of research utilizes statistical packages such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) to store, code and analyze the data. They allow the researcher to compare one variable (univariable) analysis, two variables (bivariate) or many variable (multivariable) analysis. They also allow you to construct indexes, scales and topologies. These programs are available for use on mainframe and micro-computers. Some researchers use a main frame computer to create a sub-set of their data which they can analyze on their micro-computer.

A large amount of statistical data is now being made available on CD-ROM. Examples of these include Microsoft Stat Pack, and the Census Tiger files. UCLA's Chicano Studies Research Center is in the process of designing a Latino Data Archive which will be made available on CD-ROM.

■ *Qualitative Analysis*

A much more recent application for micro-computers has been the development and use of software to manage qualitative data. While quantitative methods allow us to detect various social profiles, they are less effective in grasping the lived experience of individuals. This has been the strength of qualitative research. On the other hand, there has been a long standing critique that qualitative research does not have systematic methods to code and store data. Thus data gathered through face to face interviews, life and oral histories, and participant observation are often characterized as more soft than those gathered through the quantitative method.

Both kinds of methodologies are needed and what is being developed is a mixed methodology which incorporates both of these. Present efforts are exploring the ways in which micro-computers can assist in storing, coding and analyzing textual data. There are various programs which are currently being used by researchers for this purpose. These can be classified into two major groupings: programs where the researcher assigns the codes or tags to the data, and programs which attempt to find various frequencies and/or associations within a text with no prior coding.

The first category generally requires that you input all of your data into some kind of word processing program and then use the qualitative program to code the data. Examples of coding programs are HyperQual, Ethnograph and Tap. HyperQual utilizes Hypercard and operates on a MacIntosh while the others are IBM PC based. Programs which utilize the uncoded text to either show word frequencies or word associations are represented by programs like LexSet, Ask Sam, and Gofer. Word frequencies and association programs help to detect themes that a researcher might not detect. These kinds of programs have received high use in linguistic studies.

■ *Desktop Publishing*

One of the most neglected areas within Latino research has been the sparse use of desktop publishing programs to disseminate their findings. Programs such as Ventura and PageMaker utilize word processing files in typesetting documents so that they may be sent directly to a printer and achieve published quality. These programs provide the capability to control the majority of the publishing process up to the printing process at a modest price. The result is that it is actually easier to publish materials today. The paucity of use by Latinos within

this area seems to be related to lack of awareness and training. At UCLA the student newspaper *La Gente* utilizes PageMaker to compose the newspaper four times a year while the Chicano Studies Research Center utilizes Ventura to publish its journal *Aztlan*. In addition, the *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños' Bulletin* is produced in-house on a Macintosh computer using PageMaker.

Another reason for the scarce use of desktop publishing is related to the increasing reliance of Latino scholars on more traditional publication sources. This represents a serious move away from developing our own information sources. What is needed is a general strategy and guidelines for the development of an alternative press. What I am suggesting is that articles in the Latino press should serve a different function than those in the mainstream press. There appears to be enough outlets for some kinds of writings and a lack of outlets for others. We should maximize the potential of our press by not publishing the same items being published in the mainstream press. This is not to suggest that they be any less rigorous but rather that they need to be more critical and exploratory. This is where we can develop our own standards rather than accepting those of the dominant society.

■ *Sharing Information*

There is a number of ways to share your results whether complete or in process with others. You can send a file to a colleague at another university through BITNET, which is a point storage point electronic mail program. That is you upload your file to a mainframe computer at your university. This file is passed on to a series of other university computers until it reaches the university where you colleague is located. Your colleague's account is then marked to indicate that mail is waiting. Your colleague can then either view the file on the mainframe or down-load it to his or her personal computer. Another method of sending your mail to a colleague is directly from your computer to their's utilizing a communication program such as PROCOMM.

■ *Building New Environments*

Ironically, the very characteristic which made personal computers so powerful has begun to create problems, that is their decentralization. While decentralization has facilitated the development of essential tools such as databases and electronic mail, bulletin boards and desktop publishing, more integration is needed. This is developing on several levels. Local area networks (LANS) have been developed to enable individuals to share information as well as expensive hardware such as hard disks, modems, printers, scanners, as well as other peripherals. These LANS tie together the various computers. An example of one such network is UCLA's Chicano Studies Research Network (CSRCnet) which is part of a larger LAN called Social Science Computer network (SSCnet). This particular network not only ties together personal computers but is also connected to an IBM 4381 mainframe computer. The next stage of development, which is occurring now, is the creation of wide area networks (WANs) which will tie together several LANS in a large geographic region.

■ *Building Community Bulletin Boards*

Electronic bulletin boards have also been established so that participants can send mail; share electronic publications including news bulletins; review manuscripts, proposals; and share bibliographies and software programs. Some bulletin boards allow interactive electronic conference. Another strategy which is being pursued is the development of information utilities such as the SOURCE. Recently, groups such as Community Memory, located in the San Francisco Bay area, have developed a community-based information utility. They have terminals in libraries, senior centers, laundromats and community agencies. They have designed a system that is user friendly and does not require prior computer experience. Handnet is an example of a national bulletin board which was set up to address the issue of hunger in this country. It has expanded to include other areas. For example, the National Immigration Law Center con-

tributes information to the bulletin board on such topics as employment, legalization, deportation and visa petitions.

These information utilities have a broad range of services such as bulletin boards, bibliographic databases, software exchange, ordering services etc. These kind of utilities are difficult to develop because of the initial capital needed to create them. I am exploring the development of a mix between WANs and information utilities as a way of building a Latino information system. Such a design must retain local development while maximizing integrative functions and national and international access. This system should be able to handle text, numeric as well as images, interactively in hypertext applications. Hypertext allows you to select various chunks of data from larger data sets, link them and later use them in the production of new text. For example, if you were working on Chicano art you could search for text, bibliographic citations, as well as images or even statistics. Equally important, we need to establish support for these new systems. We need to train and support our future computer users by establishing computer mentor programs such as Compu-Mentor. Compu-Mentor is a San Francisco bay area organization which provides assistance in selecting hardware and software, and training in using computer software.

■ *Conclusion*

In summary we can see that Latinos are productively engaged in the designing and use of new tools in the new information age. However, this has been primarily limited to a handful of researchers at a few universities and private enterprises. There is still much technical work to be done. There is also the danger that future development will lead to the incorporation of Latino tools into dominant systems in ways that will not facilitate the development of local efforts. This needs to be resisted. These are difficult policy issues which need to be debated if we are going to take up Raymond Williams' challenge to develop new forms and technologies. ❐

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1983	*Sources for the Study of Puerto Rican Migration, 1879–1930.*	10.00

CULTURE AND THE ARTS TASK FORCE

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1982	*A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches.* Jesús Colón. International Publishers. Foreword by: Juan Flores.	3.75

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1987	An Ethnographic Analysis of Language Use in the Puerto Rican Community of East Harlem. Working Paper # 12. Pedro Pedraza, Jr.	5.00
	Puerto Rican Community Participation in East Harlem Bilingual Programs. Working Paper #11. Alicia Pousada.	5.00

1981 A Comparative Study of Gender Assignment to Borrowed Nouns. Working Paper #10. Shana Poplack and Alicia Pousada. 3.00

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1986 *Manos a la Obra: The Story Behind Operation Bootstrap, A Study Guide Companion to the Documentary Film, "Manos a la Obra: The Story of Operation Bootstrap."* Pedro Angel Rivera. 7.00

IN ADDITION

1986 "Puerto Rican Studies: Promptings for the Academy and the Left." Frank Bonilla, Ricardo Campos and Juan Flores in *The Left Academy: Marxist Scholarship on American Campuses.* 14.00

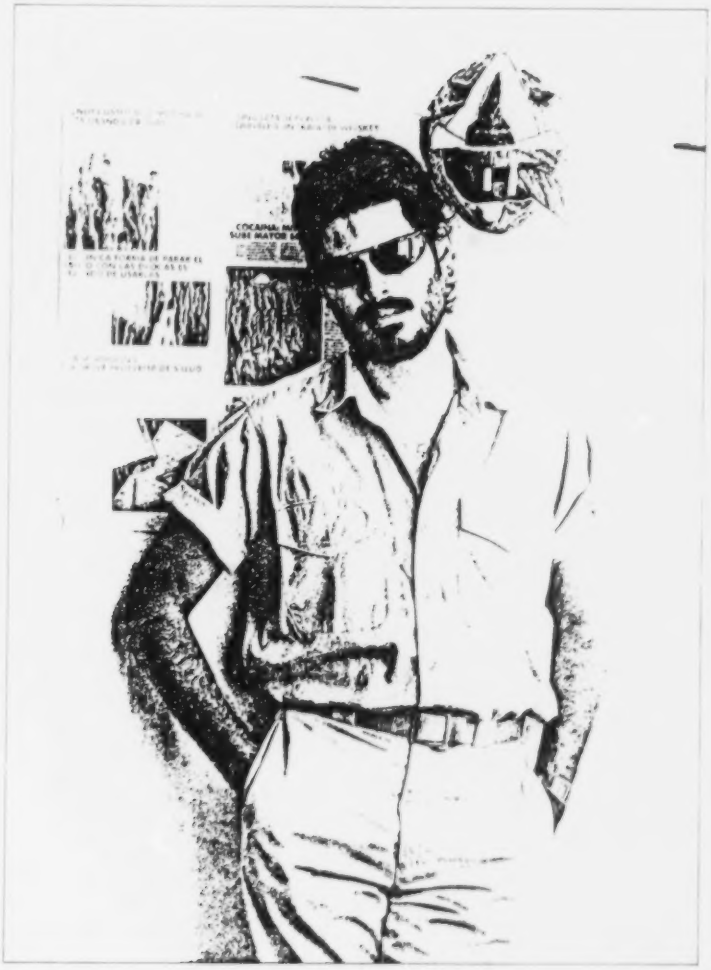
1982 Toward a Language Policy for Puerto Ricans in the United States: An Agenda for a Community in Movement. National Puerto Rican Task Force on Education Policy. Bilingual Edition. 3.00

1976 *Worker's Struggle in Puerto Rico.* Angel Quintero Rivera. 6.00

DOCUMENTARIES

Nosotras trabajamos en la costura: Puerto Rican Women in the Garment Industry.
15 minute slide show, available in English or Spanish. The story of grandmothers, mothers and daughters and their experience in the needlework and garment industries in Puerto Rico and New York. With narration, music and oral histories. Oral History Task Force. Sliding scale rental

Nosotras trabajamos en la costura.
30 minute radio documentary about Puerto Rican women in the garment industry, available in English or Spanish. With narration, music and oral histories. Produced by Rina Benmayor, Blanca Vázquez, Ana Juarbe and Kimberly Safford. 10.00 one language, 15.00 bilingual edition



Néstor Barreto, poet, designer and editor, is responsible for this issue's cover and inside cover spread. Born in Santurce, Puerto Rico in 1952, Néstor studied literature at the University of Puerto Rico and painting at the School of Visual Arts in New York. Barreto's company, QUIMERA, Editores has published two of his poetry books: *Eva* (1984), *Imago* (1986), and Elizam's Escobar's *Discurso a la Noche* as well as Armindo Nuñez's *Las Voces del Asedio*. Barreto is a founding member of CARIMAR, a multi-disciplinary urban research center dedicated to the dissemination of the history of urban planning and development in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. CARIMAR has published three books: *Cangrejos, Santurce, San Juan, Historia de su desarrollo urbano 1519-1950*; *San Juan Extramuros, iconografía para su historia*; and *La Buena Vista*. Néstor Barreto presently lives in San Juan.

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